Assimilation or third-generation disadvantage? Educational and occupational attainment among the grandchildren of immigrants in France

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Abstract: The grandchildren of immigrants have long been regarded as a litmus test for whether immigrant-origin populations successfully incorporate into the destination societies. Yet, we know very little about the "new" third generation - that is, the grandchildren of immigrants who immigrated in the postwar era to Europe. Here, we rely on new, large-scale French data providing a unique opportunity to study the socioeconomic attainment of third-generation individuals in adulthood compared to the second generation and French natives. We jointly analyze educational and labor market attainment using five indicators at both the top and bottom of the distributions, leading to a comprehensive understanding of immigrant incorporation across generations. We report three major results. First, we find a master trend across groups and outcomes reflecting parity with natives, often already achieved at the second generation. Second, third-generation attainment is moderated by gender and national origins: we document lasting educational disadvantages for North African, third-generation males, while Southern Europeans are more likely to experience economic incorporation within the lower class. Third, mixed ancestry ceases to positively predict socioeconomic attainment by the third generation. These results have important implications for ongoing scholarly discussion of immigrant incorporation in France and beyond.

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Compared to their foreign-born parents, the children of immigrants - the so-called second generation – growing up in Western European destination countries achieve better schooling and labor market outcomes in adulthood, on average (Alba and Foner 2015; Drouhot and Nee 2019; Heath, Rothon, and Kilpi 2008). However, many studies have noted that certain second-generation populations experience persistent ethnic penalties in attainment (Heath et al. 2008:218–19). This is not surprising, as existing theoretical models generally conceive of assimilation as a three-generation process, whereby the second generation is not expected to exhibit signals of complete incorporation just yet (Gans 1979, Alba and Nee 2003:215). Theoretically, one can regard the social destiny of the grandchildren of immigrants – the third generation – as an adjudicative case to assess whether immigrant-origin populations have gained full membership in the destination country (Jiménez et al. 2018).

In this paper, we study the educational and labor market attainment of the grandchildren of Southern European and North African immigrants in France, a major country of immigration in Western Europe where about 1 person in 3 is either an immigrant, a child or a grandchild of immigrant(s) (Lê, Simon & Coulmont, 2022). Our overarching goal is to provide one of the first portraits of socioeconomic assimilation to date among contemporary third-generation adults in Western Europe, many of whom originate from the postwar migration waves. To do so, we ask a set of interrelated research questions: Do the grandchildren of immigrants experience disadvantage compared to French natives, or conversely do they reach parity with them? How do socioeconomic outcomes vary by national origins and gender? Is there measurable progress in socioeconomic attainment between the second and the third generation? We answer these questions using data from the *Trajectoires et Origines 2* (hereafter TeO2) survey, a new nationally representative survey of immigrant-origin individuals as well as individuals without a migration background with rich

information on ancestry and country of birth of both parents and grandparents, detailed socioeconomic origins as well as educational and labor market attainment. To the best of our knowledge, the TeO2 data is uniquely suited to answer our research questions and offers among the best and most up-to-date survey data on adult populations with a migration background in Western Europe. Crucially, it allows us to identify third-generation individuals through ancestry (parents' and grandparents' birthplaces), allowing clear separation from natives and avoiding well-known biases linked to self-identification and ethnic attrition in samples of immigrant descendants (Tran 2018; Jiménez et al. 2018; Duncan and Trejo 2011, 2018).

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. After outlining the French context and theoretical framework distinguishing equality of outcomes and opportunity, we describe our data and methods, and present results focused on generational, gender, and origin differences in various domains of socioeconomic attainment. We conclude with implications for theories of assimilation in Western Europe.

Social and historical context: the third generation in France

The grandchildren of immigrants in contemporary France are the descendants of earlier migration waves from both within and outside Europe. Compared to other Western European nation-states, France has had a long history of immigration dating back to the 19th century, which can be described as three distinct "waves" (Noiriel 1988). The 1870-1914 period saw a so-called "first wave" of immigrants predominantly from Belgium and Italy, and coming to a halt in 1914. A "second wave" followed World War 1, with immigrants from Spain, Russia and Poland, diminishing in the 1930s in the wake of the 1929 financial crisis.

Finally, a "third wave" occurred after World War 2, with the mass arrival of Portuguese as well as migrant workers from ex-colonies in the Maghreb, particularly Algeria, brought in to fill in entry-level labor positions in the economic context of the postwar boom known in France as the *Trente Glorieuses* (between 1945 and 1973). Maghreb-origin migrations were distinctive in that they occurred in the context of decolonization, and the accompanying political turmoil.

Across such immigration waves, immigrant populations have been primarily made up of workers occupying lower class positions at destination. According to Noiriel (1988: 143), the share of immigrants occupying low positions in the industrial labor markets remained high throughout the twentieth century – more strongly so for men, while female immigrants were heavily and consistently overrepresented in paid domestic work (Noiriel 1988:142). A second historical constant surrounding immigrant populations in France has been their stigmatization and low status within the national ethnic hierarchy, from the Belgians, Italians and Spaniards of yesteryear to the Portuguese and, even more so, the Algerians of the postwar era (Schor 1996).

Gauging socioeconomic assimilation: distinguishing between inequality of outcome and inequality of opportunity

Broadly speaking, we conceive of socioeconomic assimilation as the absence of socioeconomic inequality between immigrant-origin and native populations (Alba and Nee 2003, Heath et al. 2008). To gain further traction on socioeconomic assimilation as a form of ethnic equality however, it is useful to distinguish between *inequality of outcome* and *inequality of opportunity*.

On the one hand, we may compare the absolute socioeconomic standings of immigrant- and native-origin populations to determine if the former occupies a lower place than the latter in the stratification system or if, conversely, immigrants have reached parity with natives. Intuitively, assimilation cannot be said to have taken place if immigrants are still worse off than the native population by the third generation, for it signals a form of durable inequality and "bright" ethnic boundaries (Alba 2005, Wimmer 2013) whereby categorical distinctions based on ethnicity continue to organize the distribution of socioeconomic resources – even among populations two generations removed from migration. In turn, a categorical overlap between ethnic origins and socioeconomic positions – the "consolidation" of ethnic and socioeconomic categories (Blau and Schwartz 1984) – may endogenously render ethnic categories more salient by endowing them with meaning and markers in fact attributable to socioeconomic positions (Wimmer 2013, Wimmer and Soehl 2014). It is therefore useful to compare the class positions of different origin groups in absolute terms, without regards to their different starting positions on the socioeconomic ladder.

On the other hand, we may conceive of socioeconomic assimilation in terms of equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity between immigrants and natives is signaled by the absence of influence of immigrant (ethnic) origins on life chances, which we adopt from Alba and Nee's influential formulation (2003:11). The declining significance of ethnic origins implies the increasing significance of social origins in shaping the destiny of the third generation. When gauging socioeconomic assimilation in the destination society, a key analytical task is thus to uncover potential gaps between immigrant- and native-origin families in how social origins shapes the status attainment process (Wimmer 2013). Unlike a

perspective solely focused on equality in terms of outcome, gauging equality of opportunity therefore does not presuppose that immigrant-origin individuals must reach a certain social status (e.g., the middle class) to signal assimilation; rather, it assumes that assimilation will manifest in similar attainment between descendants of immigrants and natives of similar social origins, thus implying that ethnic origins (and the inequality-inducing mechanisms associated to it, such as ethnoracial discrimination) do not distort the effect of social origins on socioeconomic attainment (Heath and Lee 2016, Bucca and Drouhot 2024).

Hypotheses for the third generation in France: assimilation or disadvantage?

The third-generation assimilation hypothesis

We may first expect socioeconomic assimilation for the third generation. New assimilation theory (Alba and Nee 2003) proposes that, in migration contexts defined by a credible commitment of the state to equal opportunity and antidiscrimination law, welfare maximizing behavior and purposive action in the form of human capital investment among immigrants, and the acquisition of greater familiarity with mainstream institutions will together lead to socioeconomic mobility across immigrant generations (Alba and Nee 2003: 36-45).

A small body of U.S. research points to third-generation socioeconomic assimilation. Early census-based studies show three-generation convergence in education and earnings among European—and, to a lesser extent, Hispanic—origin groups (Borjas 1994; Smith 2003), while more recent linked-census work finds educational advantage among European-origin grandchildren (Lowrey et al. 2021) and earnings convergence for later-generation Hispanics and Asians, especially women (Duncan and Trejo 2018). However, this scholarship remains constrained by difficulties in identifying the "true" third generation and by its

reliance on samples of immigrants descendants based on ethnic self-identification, which introduces ethnic-attrition bias (Tran 2018; Jiménez et al. 2018; Duncan and Trejo 2011, 2018).

In Western Europe, expectations of third-generation assimilation largely stem from steady progress at the second generation. Studies consistently show that children of immigrants attain higher education and occupational status than their parents (Meurs et al. 2009; Crul et al. 2012; Alba and Foner 2015; Heath et al. 2008), despite originating from low-educated, working-class immigrant cohorts (Noiriel 1988). Relatedly, scholars have shown that lower educational attainment at the second generation is generally attributable to (low) social origins among immigrant families rather than ethnic origin per se, suggesting equality of opportunity (e.g. Heath and Brinbaum 2014, Pichler 2011, Drouhot and Nee 2019: 182-4). In France, gaps with natives shrink substantially once parental education is considered (Brinbaum and Kieffer 2009; Ichou 2013). Recent TeO2 evidence also shows parity in tertiary attainment among the G2.5 generation and among third-generation individuals of mostly European descent (Beauchemin, Ichou and Simon 2022). While occupational assimilation is less documented in France, evidence from other European contexts points to a dominant role of parental background and human capital, with some residual ethnic penalties (Pichler 2011; Hermansen 2013; Gracia et al. 2015; Zorlu and van Gent 2023).

If empirical trends documented by scholars for the second generation are harbingers of what is to come at the third, we may expect lower inequality of outcomes – similar outcomes to native in absolute terms – *and* of opportunities – weaker or inexistent effect of ethnic origins on educational and labor market attainment once social origin is controlled. We formulate the following hypotheses:

H1a: Educational and labor market attainments among the grandchildren of immigrants are not significantly different from that of natives' descendants (*equality of outcome hypothesis*).

H1b: Educational and labor market attainments among the grandchildren of immigrants are not significantly different when compared to natives' descendants of similar social origins (*equality of opportunity hypothesis*).

Assimilation theory also suggests that mixed ancestry should accelerate integration (Alba and Foner 2015; Alba, Beck and Sahin 2017). By "mixed," we refer to immigrant–native unions within an individual's ancestry. Such unions both signal and facilitate boundary blurring, positioning descendants to navigate both immigrant-origin and mainstream social worlds, and thus to achieve better socioeconomic outcomes. We therefore propose:

H1c: Patterns of intergenerational progress and equality of opportunity are moderated by the degree of mixed ancestry. All else equal, third-generation individuals with a higher share of native ancestry will have attainment levels that are closer to that of the native majority compared to individuals with a more markedly immigrant ancestry. (*mixedness hypothesis*).

The third-generation disadvantage hypothesis

Conversely, lasting ethnic disadvantage may persist into the third generation. Some origin groups may continue to face discrimination in schools, neighborhoods, and labor markets, producing cumulative barriers despite formal equal-opportunity regimes. Segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Zhou 1993) predicts that racialized groups with limited social

and human capital risk forming a "rainbow underclass" (Rumbaut and Rumbaut 2001), excluded from mobility by constrained opportunities in the knowledge economy and persistent racial discrimination.

Racialization research offers a similar picture of multi-generational disadvantage. Telles and Ortiz (2008) show that third- and fourth-generation Mexican-origin individuals can have educational outcomes no better—and sometimes worse—than the second generation. Subsequent work likewise finds persistent educational and income gaps relative to Whites with comparable parental backgrounds (Ortiz and Telles 2017), with parallel evidence in other national contexts for education, earnings, and labor-market participation (Hammarstedt 2009; Ekberg et al. 2010; Deutsch et al. 2006; Pupaza et al. 2023).

Although developed in the U.S., frameworks of segmented assimilation and racialization are relevant to France. Children of non-European immigrants—especially of African origin—often grow up in poor, segregated neighborhoods and frequently remain in such areas in adulthood (McAvay 2018). They also face stronger labor-market discrimination (Silberman et al. 2007; Quillian et al. 2019; Adida et al. 2016). Qualitative research highlights feelings of exclusion and an "adversarial stance" toward mainstream institutions among second-generation youths (Marlière 2008), consistent with expectations from segmented assimilation theory. In sum, African-origin second-generation populations have experienced marked marginalization, which may extend into the third generation.

Beyond discrimination, declining aspirations may also contribute to third-generation stagnation. The "immigrant optimism" driving early generational mobility (Meurs et al. 2009; Crul et al. 2012; Alba and Foner 2015; Abramitzky et al. 2021; Kasinitz et al. 2008) may

weaken as parental ambitions go unmet (Brinbaum and Guégnard 2012). The only study focused explicitly on France shows that educational aspirations drop at the third generation, particularly among North African-origin pupils (Vallot 2016). Together, discrimination and reduced aspirations provide plausible mechanisms for third-generation disadvantage or stagnation. We therefore formulate the following competing hypotheses:

H2a: When a second-generation disadvantage in outcome is observed, socioeconomic outcomes (educational and labor market attainments) among the grandchildren of immigrants remain similar to that of the second generation and significantly lower than those of natives' descendants (*stagnation hypothesis*).

H2b: When a second-generation disadvantage in opportunity is observed, socioeconomic outcomes (educational and labor market attainments) among the grandchildren of immigrants remain similar to that of the second generation and significantly lower when compared to those of natives' descendants of similar social origins (*origin penalty hypothesis*).

Building on segmented assimilation theory and prior evidence, we further expect disadvantage to concentrate among low-status, stigmatized groups. In France—given its colonial history and the position of Muslim minorities (Adida et al. 2016)—this primarily concerns descendants of North African rather than Southern European migrants.

H3: Algerian-, Moroccan- and Tunisian-origin individuals will have lower outcomes than Portuguese-, Spanish-, and Italian-origin individuals: they experience lower absolute attainment and stronger ethnic penalties net of social origins (*ethnic segmentation hypothesis*).

Finally, we expect third-generation attainment to be gendered. Second-generation women generally outperform men educationally (Fleischmann and Kristen 2014; Heath and Brinbaum 2014), while labor-market ethnic penalties tend to be larger for men (Greenman and Xie 2008; Meurs and Pailhé 2008).

H4: Socioeconomic disadvantages vis-à-vis natives will be more frequently observed among immigrant-origin men than among immigrant-origin women, both in terms of outcomes (unadjusted for social origins) and opportunities (adjusted for social origins). Additionally, compared to immigrant-origin women, immigrant-origin men will have lower socioeconomic attainment (*gendered attainment hypothesis*).

Empirical strategy

To test our hypotheses, we rely on recent, nationally representative data from the *Trajectoires et Origines 2* (hereafter TeO2) survey gathered in 2019-2020 (Beauchemin, Ichou and Simon 2023). TeO2 oversamples individuals of immigrant origins and features approximately 27,200 respondents in total, including a large subgroup of respondents without a migration background – the so-called French natives. It contains precise information on the country of birth of the respondents, their two parents and four grandparents. Thanks to such precision, national coverage, as well as its unusually large sample size and its rich items, TeO2 is to our knowledge among the best survey instruments to study the third generation in adulthood.

Here, we take advantage of responses given by the main respondents on each of their adult children's socioeconomic attainment. Our analytical sample thus only consists of the adult children of the main respondents. If the main respondent is the child of an immigrant

(thus, second generation), then we use information reported by that respondent on his/her child(ren), who are part of the third generation. Conversely, if the main respondent is an immigrant (thus, first generation), we use information on his/her child(ren), who are part of the second generation. Figure 1 describes the structure of our analytical sample.

Figure 1: Structure of analytical sample of immigrant descendants from the TeO2 survey.

Relying on the analytical sample of the children of the main respondents allows us to increase the number of third-generation individuals and diversify their ethnic origins. Indeed, we cannot rely on the main survey sample here because the number of third-generation individuals is much lower, and of primarily European origins, which would preclude testing hypotheses by gender and national origins along the lines we outlined above. Our analyses are representative of the adult children of adults aged 18-59 living in metropolitan France in 2019-2020.

In our data, information on children's educational attainment and occupational status is reported by their parents. While this may raise concerns about accuracy, several factors mitigate this risk. Research shows that immigrant parents are highly involved in their children's educational trajectories, as they often conceive of their own migration as a

multigenerational mobility project (Foner and Dreby 2011). This strong motivation and involvement make it unlikely that they would be unaware of, or seriously misreport, their children's outcomes. This concern is even less relevant in the case of the third generation (G3), whose parents were born and raised in France and thus share a familiarity with mainstream institutions similar to that of the native population. Recent analyses based on the same dataset (Lavest et al. forthcoming), which includes matched reports from both parents and adult children, supports the reliability of parental reporting in TeO2.

However, information reported by the main respondents about their children involves one potential source of bias shared by all studies relying on such a prospective design (Song and Mare 2015). The TeO2 survey is restricted to respondents aged 18-59 and our analysis focuses on their adult children. Children of respondents born when their parents were in their late 30s or 40s are less likely to be included in our analytical sample because they either would be too young for inclusion in our analysis or their parents would be too old to be surveyed. Supplementary analyses in Appendix A shows that those who have adult children and are less than 59 have lower education and occupational status than the full TeO2 sample, suggesting that our analytical sample is negatively selected in terms of parental social origins. However, these results also show that negative selection in our sample is not dependent on generational status or migrant origin. Hence, we do not consider that such a bias threatens our research design, which is primarily based on comparing respondents across generations and origins.

Empirically, we focus on five measures of socioeconomic attainment: i) holding no degree, ii) holding a university degree iii) holding a lower-class job – that is, in an occupation classified as either routine manual or non-manual work ('*ouvrier*' or '*employé*') in official

French aggregated occupation scheme[i] – and iv) holding a professional or executive position[ii]. Finally, we also take v) being non-employed as an additional measure of labor market (non)integration.

Our analytical strategy is articulated around the separate introduction of controls for social origins across models and separate foci on generations, mixedness and national origins. To test hypotheses H1a (*equality of outcome*) and H2a (*stagnation*), we primarily rely on a logit model for our five socioeconomic outcomes distinguishing respondents by generation (and gender from the second set of analyses onwards) and adjusting for national origin, the mother's age at first birth, whether or not the family is intact (whether the second parent of the child reported upon is also the reported partner or spouse), and age and age-squared controls to account for heterogeneity in cohorts and life-course stage[iii]. These estimates are presented graphically as average marginal effects (i.e. differences in the probability to attain the outcome between each group and French natives) in Model 1 (M1). To test H2a (*equality of opportunity*) and H2b (*origin penalty*), we add several controls for social origins – namely absolute parental attainment consisting of parental education and occupational status (ISEI), relative parental attainment in the educational distribution for their respective cohorts and country of education, and the size of the municipality (logged) when the child reported upon was 15 years. We control for relative educational attainment since it shapes status aspirations and status transmissions as shown in past work on immigrant selectivity and second-generation attainment (Ichou 2014, Feliciano and Lanuza 2017). We consider the size of the municipality when the child reported upon was 15 to account for the concentration of higher education and job opportunities within France's postindustrial, knowledge economy in medium and large cities. These estimates are presented graphically as average marginal

effects in Model 2 (M2). For labor market outcomes, we also control for the respondent's own absolute educational attainment, which we present as Model 3 (M3).

To test H1c (*mixedness*), we identify second-generation individuals of mixed heritage (one immigrant and one native parent), and differentiate between those with only one immigrant grandparent versus those with two or more at the third generation. To test H2c (*ethnic segmentation*), we produce a final series of estimates in which we model outcomes for the main origin groups in our sample, i.e. Portuguese-, Spanish-, Italian-, Algerian-, Moroccan-, and Tunisian-origin second- and third-generation respondents specifically[iv]. While in the first models focus on broad differences between generations, we study mixedness and national origins separately for male and female respondents. H4 (*gendered attainment*) depends, first, on whether native-G3 and G3-G2 differences are gender specific – for instance, whether or not we observe attainment penalties for male respondents but not among female respondents. Distinctly but relatedly, H4 further rests on separate tests for differences in predicted probabilities among immigrant-origin male and female respondents (rather than gender-specific differences vis-à-vis the native baseline). We discuss these tests derived from alternative models pooling men and women when relevant, and provide the full results in Appendix H.

Throughout, we use sampling weights and clustered standard errors by family to account for survey design. Appendix B provides further details on the construction of our independent and dependent variables, and Appendix E provides more information on missing data, which is not a substantial problem in our study. Appendix C shows models with an incremental introduction of social origins controls, and Appendix G provides descriptive

statistics on age and social origins control variables. We stick to one model introducing all social origins controls in the main text for clarity.

Our tests of assimilation versus third-generation disadvantage focus on two key contrasts (Lundberg et al. 2021): differences between G3 and natives, and differences between G2 and G3. The former are shown as average marginal effects for G3 relative to the native reference category, while G2–G3 differences are indicated graphically by brackets linking the two estimates, based on alternative specifications that shift the reference group. Both contrasts are essential: native–G2 and native–G3 differences capture progress toward the native baseline, whereas G2–G3 differences reveal change across immigrant generations.

Descriptive results

Table 1 below shows the generation and origin breakdown of our analytical sample.

Table 1: Structure of analytical sample by ancestry and gender

Variable of interest	**Male** (5229 obs.)	**Female** (5112 obs.)	**Total**, N = 10341
Ancestry			
G4+ (reference group)	*70.2% (931)*	*72.0% (922)*	*71.1% (1 853)*
G2	15.9% (2 969)	15.3% (2 876)	15.6% (5 845)
G3	13.9% (1 329)	12.7% (1 314)	13.3% (2 643)
Ancestry & mixedness			
G4+ (reference group)	*70.2% (931)*	*72.0% (922)*	*71.1% (1 853)*
G2.0	6.8% (1 733)	7.2% (1 746)	7.0% (3 479)
G2.5	9.0% (1 236)	8.2% (1 130)	8.6% (2 366)
G3 (2+)	7.0% (676)	6.1% (640)	6.5% (1 316)
G3 (1)	6.9% (653)	6.6% (674)	6.8% (1 327)
Ancestry & origin			
G4+ (reference group)	*70.2% (931)*	*72.0% (922)*	*71.1% (1 853)*
G2 Algeria	2.2% (336)	2.1% (367)	2.2% (703)

G3 Algeria	2.1% (243)	2.0% (274)	2.0% (517)
G2 Morocco	2.3% (369)	2.5% (351)	2.4% (720)
G3 Morocco	0.3% (47)	0.2% (40)	0.3% (87)
G2 Tunisia	0.8% (91)	0.9% (102)	0.9% (193)
G3 Tunisia	0.5% (72)	0.3% (49)	0.4% (121)
G2 Portugal	2.8% (398)	2.4% (341)	2.6% (739)
G3 Portugal	1.1% (115)	1.0% (123)	1.0% (238)
G2 Spain	0.5% (89)	0.6% (88)	0.5% (177)
G3 Spain	2.8% (180)	2.6% (189)	2.7% (369)
G2 Italy	0.5% (47)	0.2% (45)	0.4% (92)
G3 Italy	3.9% (275)	3.7% (247)	3.8% (522)
G2 Other	6.7% (1 639)	6.6% (1 582)	6.7% (3 221)
G3 Other	3.2% (397)	2.8% (392)	3.0% (789)

Note: Percentages are weighted for survey design.
Data source: *Trajectoires et Origines 2* (2019-2020)

The descendants of immigrants account for approximately 29% of the population under study here (i.e. the children of first- and second-generation immigrants and of the native French population). The breakdown by national origins shows that the third generation is larger among older, European-origin populations than among the more recent North-African origin populations.

Table 2 shows the ancestry structure of the third generation in our sample, by national origins. The overwhelming majority of respondents have a mixed ancestry: only around 6% have 4 foreign-born grandparents. Relatedly, we note that over 90% of the third generation has either one or two immigrant grandparents. This vindicates our analytical decision to look at those with one vs. two or more immigrant grandparents in the analyses focused on mixedness. There there exist only limited differences in the degree of ancestral mixedness between different national groups.

Overall, we note the high proportion of G3 individuals with only one or two immigrant grandparents, which is consistent with prior research on France. A recent study shows that nine out of ten third-generation descendants of immigrants in France have only one or two immigrant grandparents (Le et al. 2022). This reflects both long-term patterns of intermarriage—especially among descendants of European immigrants—and the cumulative effect of mixing across generations. Even when no intermarriage occurs among immigrant grandparents, having only one parent of immigrant origin mechanically limits the number of immigrant grandparents to two. The figures in Table 2 therefore reflect well-documented trends of genealogical hybridity in contemporary French society (Ferry et al. 2025) [v].

Table 2: Detailed ancestry structure of the third-generation sample

Number of immigrant grandparents	**G3 Algeria** (517)	**G3 Morocco** (87)	**G3 Tunisia** (121)	**G3 Portugal** (238)	**G3 Spain** (371)	**G3 Italy** (522)	**G3 Other** (789)	**Total**. N = 2645
1	32.8% (160)	54.7% (43)	48.7% (60)	20.6% (50)	44.9% (154)	49.1% (263)	81.2% (599)	50.9% (1 329)
2	46.9% (207)	32.1% (28)	45.8% (51)	61.6% (138)	48.9% (180)	44.1% (193)	13.9% (130)	39.9% (927)
3	4.3% (22)	1.8% (1)	2.8% (5)	4.4% (10)	2.8% (17)	4.0% (42)	3.3% (34)	3.6% (131)
4	16.0% (128)	11.4% (15)	2.7% (5)	13.4% (40)	3.3% (20)	2.8% (24)	1.6% (26)	5.7% (258)

Note: Percentages are weighted for survey design.
Data source: *Trajectoires et Origines 2*

Finally, Table 3 shows descriptive statistics for our socioeconomic outcomes by ancestry, mixedness and national origins. Immigrant descendants are more likely to be without any degree and non-employed compared to the majority population. Among those that are employed, the third generation is more likely to be in the lower class. Note that being in such a socioeconomic position is common among the reference group: 57% hold such a position. Differences by degree of mixed ascent are moderate. We discern large differences by national origins, however: the Algerians and Portuguese have consistently worse educational outcomes at the third generation, although these patterns are based on small

numbers for the latter. Both groups also have elevated shares of non-employed and lower shares of individuals holding top-level labor market positions.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for socioeconomic attainment by generations, mixedness, and national origins

		University degree	No degree	Professional / Executive	Lower class	Non-employed
Ancestry	G4+ (reference group) (1853)	34.3% (459)	9.5% (173)	18.2% (160)	57.1% (524)	15.6% (184)
	G2 (5845)	35.6% (1 271)	15.4% (859)	19.4% (388)	56.2% (1 220)	24.6% (953)
	G3 (2643)	29.9% (569)	14.6% (364)	15.4% (189)	62.7% (595)	18.8% (343)
Ancestry & Mixedness	G2.0 (3479)	33.9% (757)	15.5% (513)	17.0% (226)	57.3% (757)	27.4% (602)
	G2.5 (2366)	37.0% (514)	15.3% (346)	21.3% (162)	55.4% (463)	22.5% (351)
	G3 (2+) (1316)	27.1% (256)	15.1% (184)	14.2% (70)	65.1% (279)	17.7% (183)
	G3 (1) (1327)	32.6% (313)	14.2% (180)	16.6% (119)	60.1% (316)	19.9% (160)
Ancestry & Origins	G2 Algeria (703)	23.4% (100)	17.3% (115)	14.4% (26)	66.3% (126)	36.7% (154)
	G3 Algeria (517)	22.4% (81)	28.3% (94)	16.6% (26)	65.0% (113)	28.1% (95)
	G2 Morocco (720)	38.3% (144)	14.1% (113)	17.4% (40)	63.7% (123)	25.5% (124)
	G3 Morocco (87)	41.3% (16)	24.3% (19)	15.6% (5)	31.1% (9)	22.0% (11)
	G2 Tunisia (193)	42.7% (53)	15.8% (35)	13.9% (12)	69.4% (48)	27.0% (42)
	G3 Tunisia (121)	40.3% (22)	18.8% (23)	18.5% (8)	65.5% (25)	19.0% (19)
	G2 Portugal (739)	32.4% (149)	9.8% (90)	19.8% (65)	52.9% (245)	12.5% (89)
	G3 Portugal (238)	26.0% (28)	19.5% (30)	7.4% (6)	79.7% (39)	20.8% (30)
	G2 Spain (177)	40.7% (57)	8.3% (12)	11.3% (16)	55.6% (48)	12.7% (18)
	G3 Spain (369)	22.3% (77)	12.5% (40)	9.7% (17)	62.2% (109)	17.9% (43)
	G2 Italy (92)	27.3% (25)	4.1% (7)	28.2% (12)	49.5% (26)	38.6% (11)
	G3 Italy (522)	34.1% (135)	7.6% (60)	18.7% (49)	63.2% (144)	13.8% (60)
	G2 Other (3221)	39.1% (743)	18.6% (487)	22.9% (217)	50.7% (604)	25.7% (515)
	G3 Other (789)	35.4% (210)	12.9% (98)	16.9% (78)	58.0% (156)	19.3% (85)
	Total (10341)	33.9% (2 299)	11.1% (1 396)	18.0% (737)	57.7% (2 339)	17.3% (1 480)

Note: Percentages are weighted for survey design. Data source: *Trajectoires et Origines 2*

To better see through these aggregate trends, we need to turn to statistical modeling. Although they are a bedrock of assimilation research on the second (e.g. Alba and Nee 2003, Waters and Pineau 2015, Drouhot 2021) and third (e.g. Ortiz and Telles 2017, Jiménez et al.

2018, Zhao and Drouhot 2024) generations, we acknowledge that cross-cohort comparisons implicit within approaches in terms of "synthetic generations" - comparing unrelated individuals on the basis of nativity status – may be sensitive to compositional changes in immigration streams over time (Garip 2016, Park and Myers 2010). To assess this potential issue, we compared the socioeconomic characteristics of the immigrant generation in the families of our G2 and G3 individuals in Appendix D. On average, the immigrant grandparents of G3 arrived in France 31 years earlier than the immigrant parents of G2 (1952 vs. 1983). However, their socioeconomic profiles are broadly similar. In particular, the relative educational attainment of the immigrant grandparents of G3 (51st percentile in their origin society) is only slightly higher than that of the immigrant parents of G2 (47th percentile). Results for occupational status are broadly similar. To be clear, we do not claim that both immigrant cohorts shared identical characteristics or faced the same context of reception. However, the differences we observe are modest and unlikely to explain the generational disparities we report below, especially in models where we control for parental socioeconomic status. Hence, and in the context of our broadly descriptive effort aiming at offering an initial picture of the third generation at a given point in time, we regard our synthetic generations approach as empirically appropriate.

Results from regression models

Equality or disadvantage at the third generation?

We start by comparing socioeconomic attainment among the children and grandchildren of immigrants compared to the majority population to shed light on broad differences between generations. Results in Figure 2, expressed as average marginal effects, show generational

differences from the native baseline for each outcome. We graphically present results of the tests for significant G2-G3 references based on alternative specifications of the reference categories in our models.

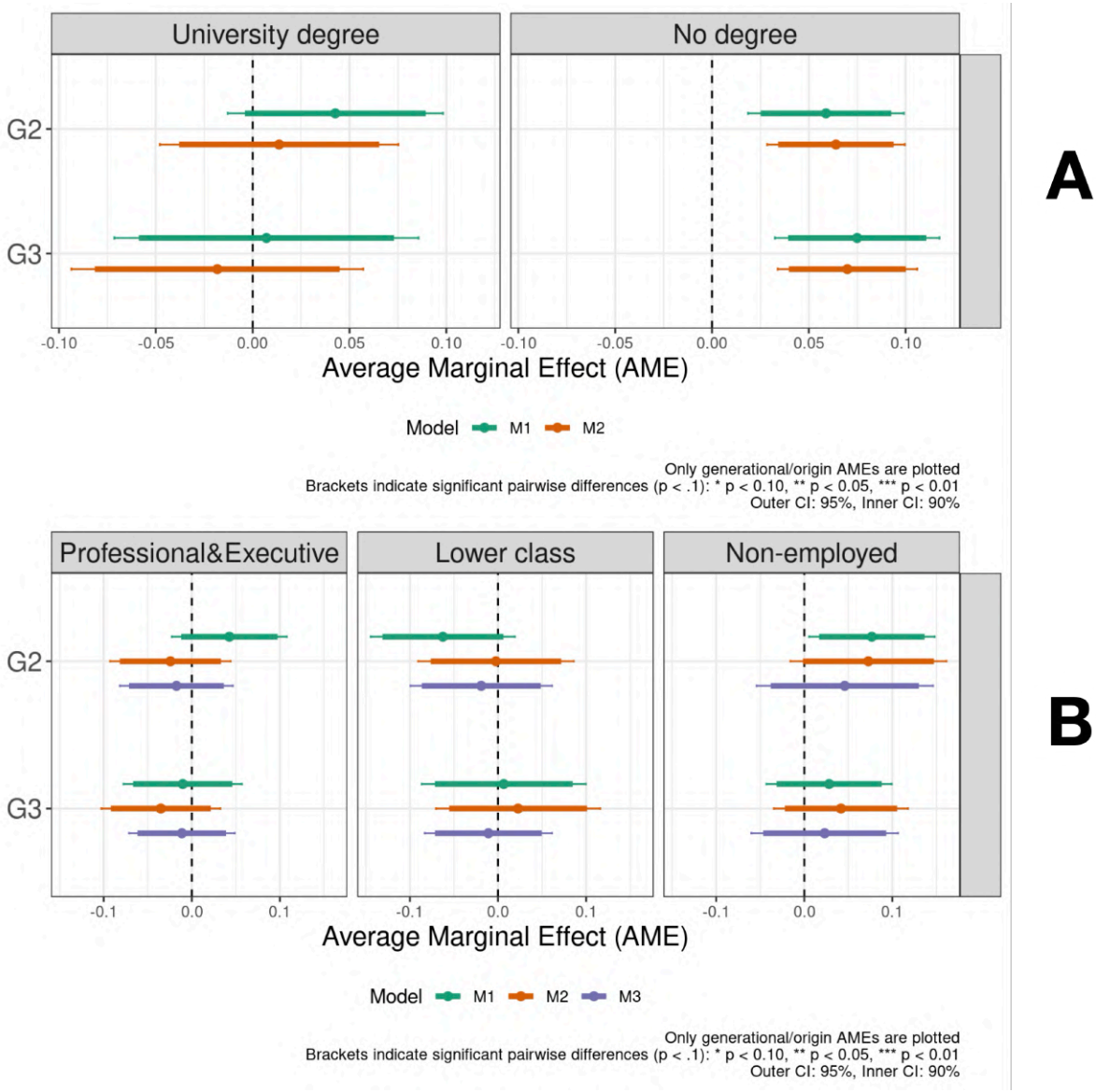


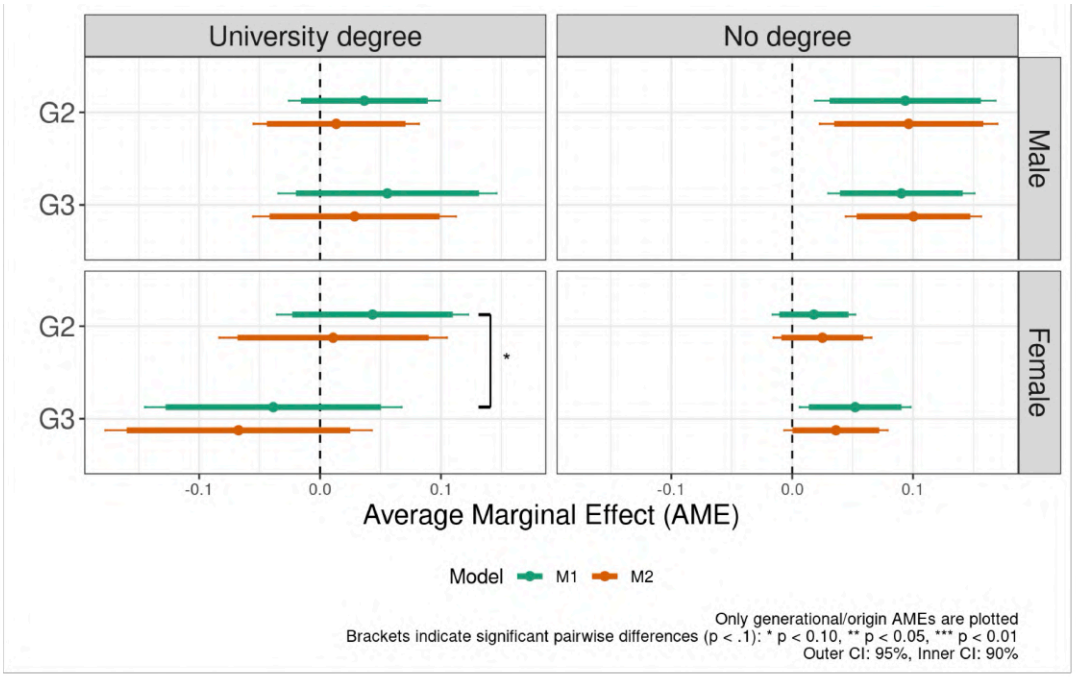
Figure 2: Socioeconomic attainment across generations for educational (panel A) and labor market (panel B) outcomes. M1 controls for national origins, age, age², gender, mother's age at first birth, and intact family (i.e., whether the second parent is the current partner). Model 2 adds controls for social origins - parents' educational attainment (absolute measure), parents' relative education, parents' social status (ISEI), and the size of the municipality (log) when the respondent was 15 years old (models with an incremental introduction of social origins controls are available in Appendix C). Model 3 adds respondents' educational attainment (for labor market outcomes only). All estimates are weighted for survey design and control for family clusters. Dashed line represents native level of attainment, and brackets show results of within-model tests for G2-G3 differences if significant (* $p \leq 0.10$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, *** $p \leq 0.01$).

Starting with educational outcomes (Panel A), we note limited evidence of third generation progress per se. First, the third generation shows parity with natives for the attainment of a university degree, whether or not one controls for social origins – as expressed by the similarity in the point estimates across models. Such a parity in outcome and opportunity is already visible at the second generation, which evokes a stable pattern of assimilation at the top of the educational distribution. At the other end of the educational spectrum however, the third generation – like its second-generation counterpart - remains at an elevated risk of being without any degree. The unadjusted probability among natives being 9.5%, an additional 7.5 percentage points among G3 amounts to a 79% relative increase in the probability to be without a degree in adulthood. A sizeable penalty is also present at G2, reflecting a stable disadvantage among immigrant descendants.

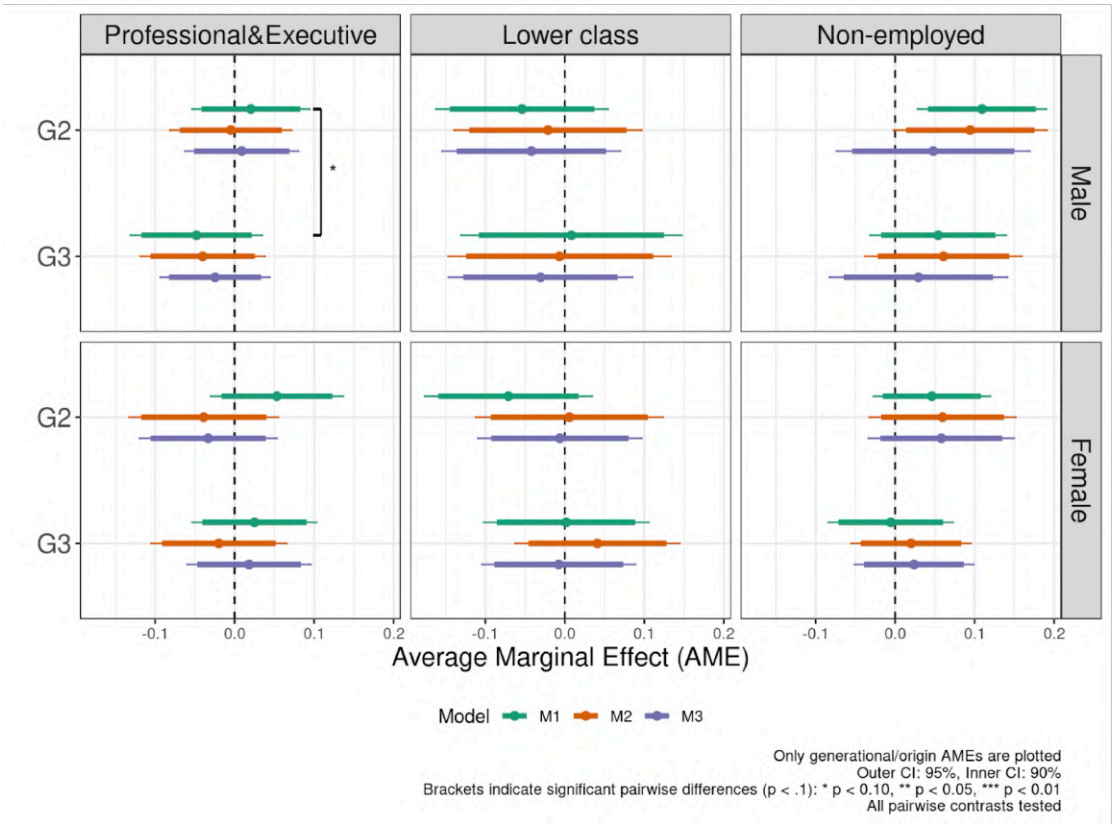
Switching to labor market outcomes (Panel B), the probability to be holding a professional or executive position, to be in a lower-class occupation as well as to be non-employed do not significantly differ between natives and the third generation. As in the case of holding a university degree, we document a similar pattern of parity already attained at the second generation. Indeed, we find no significant G2-G3 difference.

Differences by gender

Figure 3 shows gender-specific analyses with similar specifications.



A



B

Figure 3: Socioeconomic attainment across generations for educational (panel A) and labor market (panel B) outcomes for male and female respondents. M1 controls for national origins, age, age², mother's age at first birth, and intact family (i.e., whether the second parent is the current partner). Model 2 adds controls for social origins - parents' educational attainment (absolute measure), parents' relative education, parents' social status (ISEI), and the size of the municipality (log) when the respondent was 15 years old (models with an incremental introduction of social origins controls are available in Appendix C). Model 3 adds respondents' educational attainment (for labor market outcomes only). All estimates are weighted for survey design and control for family clusters. Dashed line represents native level of attainment, and brackets show results of within-model tests for G2-G3 differences if significant (* $p \leq 0.10$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, *** $p \leq 0.01$).

The elevated probability to be without any degree compared to natives documented earlier in pooled models is in fact gendered, and more clearly found among male respondents. In models controlling for social origins, male respondents at the second and third generation are approximately 10% more likely than socially comparable natives, while estimates for female respondents across generations do not significantly differ from those of female natives. Additional tests in Appendix H show male and female estimates of the probability to be without a degree at the third generation are also significantly different from each other, not just differing from socially comparable natives. Results for university education are not drastically different by gender, although we note that before controlling for social origins, third-generation females are *less* likely to hold such a degree compared to the second generation, as per our within-model test for the G2-G3 difference. Altogether, gender-specific risks of being without a degree in adulthood and significant differences in male-female estimates at the third generation bring some support to H4.

For labor market outcomes, gender differences are not as marked. There is a decline in the probability to hold an executive position among third-generation males but G2-G3 differences cease to be significant in models controlling for social origins and the respondent's education. Altogether, analyses divided by gender do not drastically differ from the aggregate analyses in Figure 2.

Are those of mixed ancestry experiencing better socioeconomic outcomes?

Figure 4 differentiates between those with one (G2.5) and two (G2.0) immigrant parents at the second generation and those with either one (G3 (1)) or two or more (G3 (2+)) immigrant

grandparents. At the second generation, the advantage of a mixed ascent expected under assimilation theory is more clearly visible for female respondents. The “unmixed” second generation females are more likely to be without degree than both natives and the 2.5 generation, even after accounting for social origins.

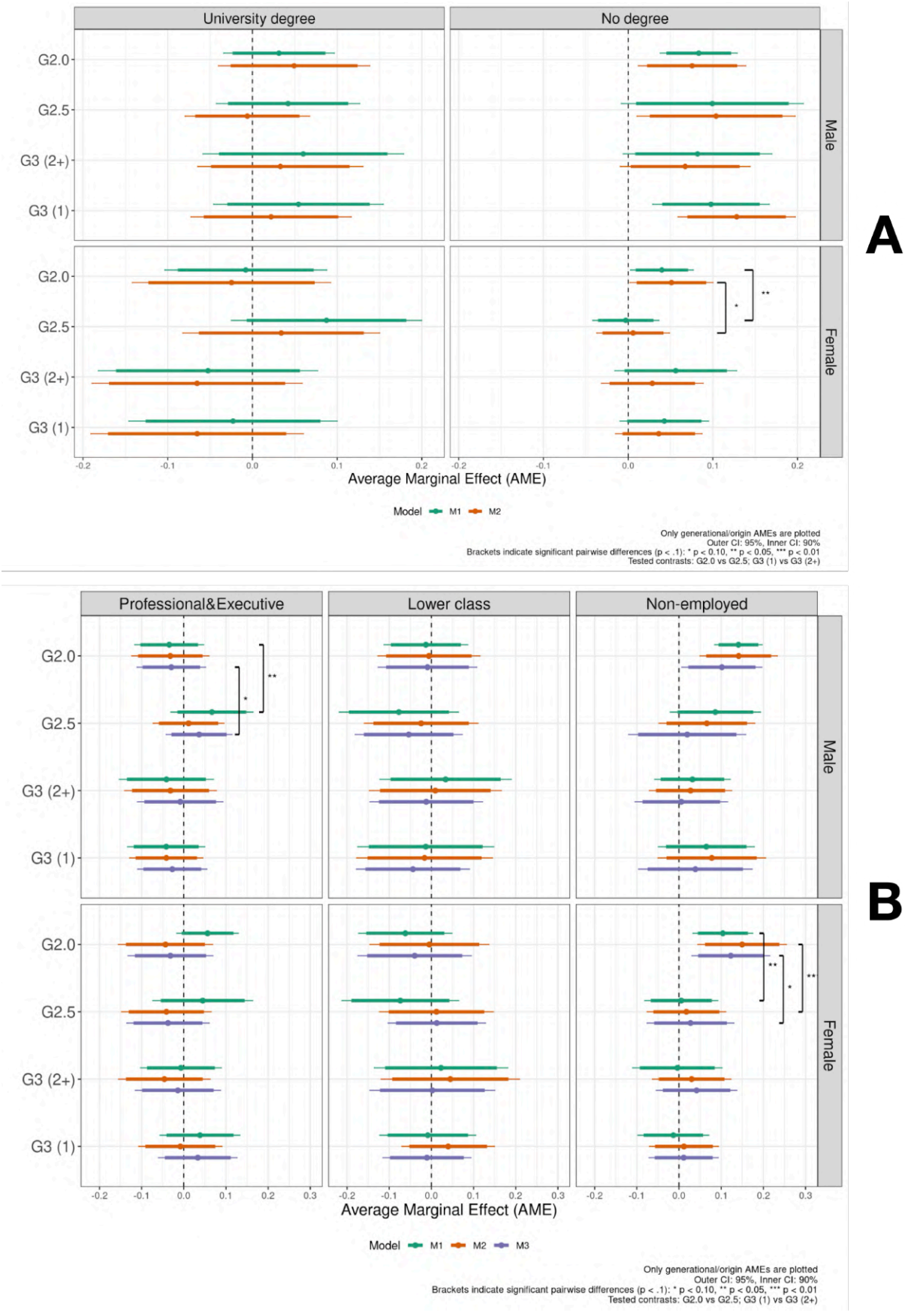


Figure 4: Socioeconomic attainment across generations for educational (panel A) and labor market (panel B) outcomes, by gender. M1 controls for national origins, age, age², mother's age at first birth, and intact family

(i.e., whether the second parent is the current partner). Model 2 adds controls for social origins - parents' educational attainment (absolute measure), parents' relative education, parents' social status (ISEI), and the size of the municipality (log) when the respondent was 15 years old (models with an incremental introduction of social origins controls are available in Appendix C). Model 3 adds respondents' educational attainment (for labor market outcomes only). All estimates are weighted for survey design and control for family clusters. Dashed bars express the attainment of the reference group (G4+ natives) and brackets show results of within-model tests for G2-G3 differences (* $p \leq 0.10$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, *** $p \leq 0.01$).

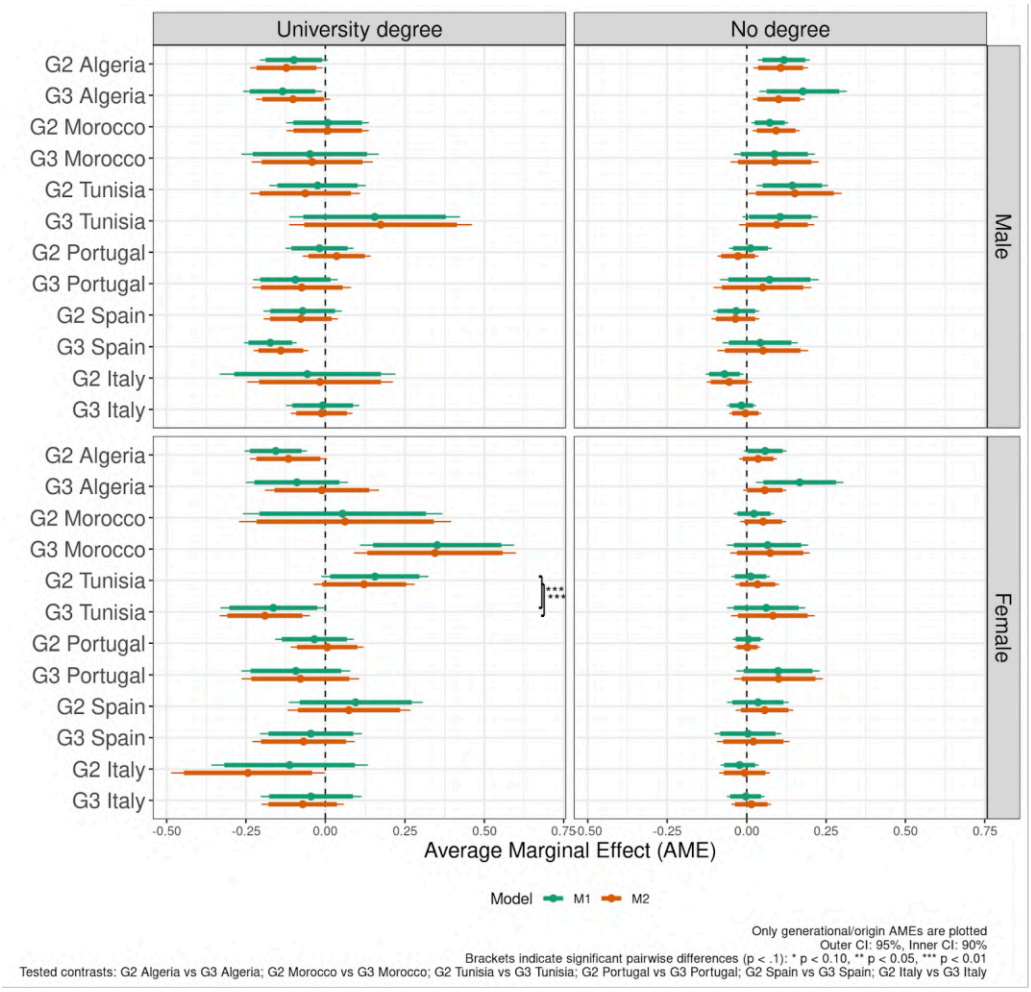
At the third generation however, mixedness does not translate into better educational outcomes among females, whose point estimates suggest penalties in attainment without reaching statistical significance. Among males, mixedness translates into a higher probability to be without a degree, especially after controlling for social origins. Third-generation males with only one immigrant grandparent have a predicted probability to be without any degree that is around 13 percentage points higher than socially comparable natives, which is a considerable disadvantage considering the baseline unadjusted probability among natives (9.5 %). Meanwhile, among males with two or more immigrant grandparents, elevated risks to be without a degree after controlling for social origins significantly differ from female estimates (see appendix H for full results).

Results for labor market outcomes (panel B) show that mixed ascent positively matters for the children of immigrants. Among men, the unmixed second generation is more likely than natives to be unemployed. Likewise, unmixed second-generation men are less likely than the mixed second to be in a professional or executive job. Among women, the unmixed second generation is more likely to be unemployed than their mixed counterparts – even net of social origins. In line with the results for educational attainment however, the advantage of mixed ancestry largely disappears at the third generation. Altogether, these results suggest a premium in socioeconomic attainment for females at the second generation. However, they do not conform to expectations derived from assimilation theory: at the third generation, the degree of mixed ancestry is not predictive of socioeconomic attainment.

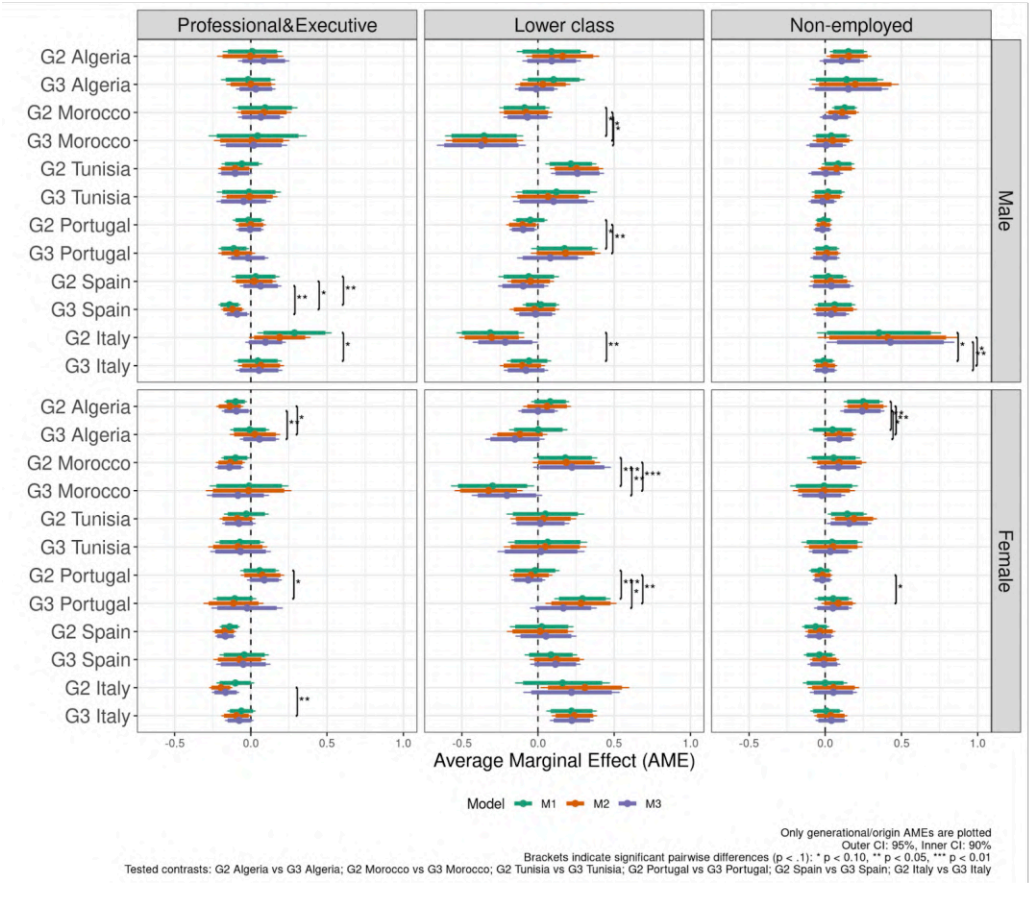
When it is, it is more clearly associated with disadvantage, as in the case of third generation men's probability to be without any educational credential[vi].

Ethnic segmentation: are those of North African descent worse off than those of South European descent?

Figure 5 shows results from models with and without controls for social origins and education separated by gender for second- and third-generation respondents of North African and South European ancestry. Starting with attainment of university degrees among males (top left of panel A), we see no G2-G3 differences by national origins, and limited differences with French natives. Nevertheless, third-generation Algerian males are less likely to obtain such a degree than natives. More surprisingly, we observe a large disadvantage among third-generation Spanish males – even after controlling for social origins.


University degree
No degree
Male
Female
G2 Algeria
G3 Algeria
G2 Morocco
G3 Morocco
G2 Tunisia
G3 Tunisia
G2 Portugal
G3 Portugal
G2 Spain
G3 Spain
G2 Italy
G3 Italy
-0.50
-0.25
0.00
0.25
0.50
0.75
Average Marginal Effect (AME)
Model
M1
M2
Only generational/origin AMEs are plotted
Outer CI: 95%, Inner CI: 90%
Brackets indicate significant pairwise differences (p < .1): * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01
Tested contrasts: G2 Algeria vs G3 Algeria; G2 Morocco vs G3 Morocco; G2 Tunisia vs G3 Tunisia; G2 Portugal vs G3 Portugal; G2 Spain vs G3 Spain; G2 Italy vs G3 Italy

A


Professional&Executive
Lower class
Non-employed
Male
Female
G2 Algeria
G3 Algeria
G2 Morocco
G3 Morocco
G2 Tunisia
G3 Tunisia
G2 Portugal
G3 Portugal
G2 Spain
G3 Spain
G2 Italy
G3 Italy
-0.5
0.0
0.5
1.0
Average Marginal Effect (AME)
Model
M1
M2
M3
Only generational/origin AMEs are plotted
Outer CI: 95%, Inner CI: 90%
Brackets indicate significant pairwise differences (p < .1): * p < 0.10, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01
Tested contrasts: G2 Algeria vs G3 Algeria; G2 Morocco vs G3 Morocco; G2 Tunisia vs G3 Tunisia; G2 Portugal vs G3 Portugal; G2 Spain vs G3 Spain; G2 Italy vs G3 Italy

B

Figure 5: Socioeconomic attainment across generations for educational (panel A) and labor market (panel B) outcomes, by gender. M1 controls for national origins, age, age², mother's age at first birth, and intact family (i.e., whether the second parent is the current partner). Model 2 adds controls for social origins - parents' educational attainment (absolute measure), parents' relative education, parents' social status (ISEI), and the size of the municipality (log) when the respondent was 15 years old (models with an incremental introduction of social origins controls are available in Appendix C). Model 3 adds respondents' educational attainment (for labor market outcomes only). All estimates are weighted for survey design and control for family clusters. Dashed bars express the attainment of the reference group (G4+ natives) and brackets show results of within-model tests for G2-G3 differences (* $p \leq 0.10$, ** $p \leq 0.05$, *** $p \leq 0.01$).

Among females (lower left, panel A), third-generation Algerians catch up to natives in terms of university education. Third-generation Moroccan females even outperform natives, and have estimates that are also significantly different from their male counterparts (see Appendix H). Only among the Tunisian-origin do we see a female-specific third-generation decline, whereby third-generation Tunisian females are less likely than both the second generation, natives and third-generation Tunisian males to hold a university degree.

Among European-origin groups, there are little significant differences, neither across generation nor with natives. We see more clearly differentiated trends by broad regional origins for the probability to be without a degree (right, panel A): among North African (i.e. Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) males, there remain elevated risks at the third generation, with no statistically significant difference from the second generation. Social origins do not help explain such disadvantages. Among European males (i.e. Portugal, Spain, and Italy), there are no disadvantages vis-à-vis natives. We find a similar trend among females, albeit a less marked one whereby many estimates do not show statistical difference from natives but remain seemingly higher than among Southern Europeans. Supplementary analyses in Appendix F aggregating individuals by broad regional origins confirm this divergence between North Africans and Southern Europeans.

Turning to labor market outcomes (Panel B), results are less easily interpretable than suggested by a simple North African vs Southern European dichotomy in which the former would be systematically disadvantaged. When it comes to holding an executive position, North African males are not disadvantaged. Spanish- and to a lesser extent Portuguese populations, however, exhibit a third-generation decline. Meanwhile, we document clear positive change between generations among North African women, whose probabilities do not differ from natives at the third generation. Beyond native-immigrant gaps, specific tests for differences in male-female estimates (Appendix H) show unequal probabilities to hold a professional position favor male respondents at the second, and to a lesser third generation across multiple origins (Spanish, Italian, Moroccan, Algerian…).

When it comes to being in the lower class, results suggest either stability or significantly diminishing probabilities across generations for both males and females of North African origins. The opposite holds among Portuguese-origin third generations. Third-generation Italian females are also significantly more likely than natives of similar origins and education to be lower-class. We observe more stability between generations for non-employment, and a general pattern of parity with natives at the third generation once social origins are controlled for.

Summary of empirical results

We can now relate these results back to our initial hypotheses. Starting with unadjusted (that is, only controlling for gender, age, age-squared and national origins) socioeconomic attainment, we had contrasting expectations of either *equality of outcome* (H1a) or *stagnation* (H2a). Adjudicating between these hypotheses involves comparing G2-G3 and G3-native

estimates for Model 1 in Figures 2 and 3. Across most estimates, we document a relative equality between the third generation and natives that was already apparent in the second generation. These results suggest an equality of outcomes between natives and the descendants of immigrants, and thus assimilation rather than stagnation in disadvantage. Only for the probability to be without a degree do we see a trend truly conforming to our *stagnation* hypothesis. In Model 2 in Figures 2 and 3, we introduced rigorous controls for social origins. These adjusted results do not dramatically alter the results just discussed, and do not "explain away" penalties in earlier models. However, certain significant 2G-3G differences (for attaining a university degree among females and a professional position among males) disappear in Model 2, which suggests that they were mediated by differences in social origins. Altogether, adjusted results bring support for the equality of opportunity hypothesis (H1b) rather than penalties due to immigrant origin, except at the bottom of the educational distribution for those holding no degree, and for whom social origins do not explain away disadvantage.

Lastly, we investigated the empirical relevance of three sources of heterogeneity among the descendants of immigrants, namely gender (H4), mixed ancestry (H1c) and national origins (H3). Results disaggregated by gender from the second series of models onwards show that much of the elevated risks of being without a degree at the third generation primarily affects (North African) males. These results, along with the gendered effect of mixed ancestry (see below) and consistent differences in male-female estimates (see Appendix H for full results) brings support to our gendered attainment hypothesis (H4).

In line with expectations derived from assimilation theories, mixed ancestry has a substantially positive influence for socioeconomic attainment at the second generation.

However, it is relatively weak or negative at the third. When mixed ancestry matters among grandchildren of immigrants, it is associated with worse outcomes (i.e., for the probability of holding no degree among males). We thus find no support for H1c. We find some segmentation by national origins, although it does not neatly follow the ethnic hierarchy pattern (with Southern Europeans on top) we outlined. North African-origin individuals (males especially) are more likely to be without any degree than Southern Europeans, but Spanish-origin individuals experience a large penalty in terms of university attainment. In the realm of work, Southern Europeans experience assimilation into the lower class, while North Africans (especially Moroccans) are less likely to be in the lower class than natives and their second-generation counterparts alike. Overall, North Africans appear more disadvantaged in education, and Southern European (the strong penalty for Spanish-origin males in education notwithstanding) more disadvantaged on the labor market, which brings partial support to H3.

Discussion and conclusion

These results yield three main takeaways. First, socioeconomic attainment among the third generation largely matches that of natives, consistent with neo-assimilation theory (Alba and Nee 2003). Across outcomes, grandchildren of immigrants do not systematically differ from the native French population, and we find no evidence of the "third-generation decline" reported in some U.S. and other contexts (Telles and Ortiz 2008, 2017; Deutsch et al. 2006; Pupaza et al. 2023). In this regard, the historical pattern of a "French melting pot" (Noiriel 1988) appears to persist into the contemporary era.

Second, certain disadvantages concentrated at the intersection of gender and origin qualify the extent of such a melting pot. North African-origin third-generation men, much

like their second-generation counterparts, face a substantial educational penalty: roughly one-quarter of third-generation Algerians and Moroccans lack any credential—more than twice the native rate (9.5%). This aligns with prior work on early school leaving among North African-origin pupils (Jonsson et al. 2014). Ethnographic studies of marginalized urban areas, where many descendants reside, also document widespread disenchantment toward school institutions (McAvay 2018; Marlière 2008) despite high parental aspirations (Ichou and Oberti 2014). Taken together, these patterns echo segmented assimilation theory's depiction of a "rainbow underclass" among certain racialized descendants left behind in postindustrial labor markets (Portes and Rumbaut 2001).

Surprisingly, this educational disadvantage does not extend to occupational outcomes: North African-origin third-generation individuals overall reach parity with natives, and Algerian-origin women are even more likely than their second-generation counterparts to hold executive positions. By contrast, Portuguese-, Italian-, and Spanish-origin third-generation individuals—especially women—are more often found in lower-class jobs. This pattern aligns with historical accounts of Portuguese families prioritizing stable lower middle-class employment and property acquisition over higher education (Delon 2019). Less sociological research exists on contemporary Spanish- and Italian-origin populations, but it is plausible that their assimilation in the lower class reflects similar mobility strategies.

Third, we find little positive effect of mixed ancestry after the second generation, contrary to a core prediction of neo-assimilation theory (Alba and Nee 2003; Alba and Foner 2015; Alba, Beck and Sahin 2017). This echoes recent evidence from Sweden showing educational disadvantage among grandchildren of refugees with mixed native–immigrant grandparental origins (Pupaza et al. 2023). One possible explanation concerns selection into

intermarriage: immigrants who intermarry often have higher socioeconomic status in the U.S. (Kantarevic 2004), whereas natives who intermarry appear negatively selected in Sweden (Elwert 2020). Yet in TeO2, parents of individuals with only one immigrant grandparent are more likely to be university-educated (39.5%) than those with two or more (29%), which argues against negative selection. The mechanism behind this "mixedness penalty" therefore remains unclear and warrants further investigation.

In closing, this study provides the first large-scale analysis of socioeconomic attainment among the adult third generation—including those of non-European origins—in Western Europe. By relying on ancestry information and grandparents' and parents' birthplaces, we avoid the composite "third-plus" category and ethnic-attrition biases that have limited much prior work, especially in the U.S. (Tran 2018; Duncan and Trejo 2011, 2018; Jiménez et al. 2018). Our findings answer key questions but also raise new ones. Because the third generation is still relatively young, we relied on parental reports of adult children, an approach that yields sufficient numbers but introduces selectivity in terms of childbearing age. Although supplementary analyses indicate broadly comparable socioeconomic profiles for immigrant parents and grandparents (Appendix D), our synthetic-generations design remains vulnerable to the usual confounding of cohort and generational effects in cross-sectional data (Park and Myers 2010; Garip 2016; Zhao and Drouhot 2024). Future work using data that link family members across generations—and allow comparable measurement of socioeconomic outcomes—offers an important avenue forward (e.g., Zorlu and van Gent 2024).

We hope our study serves as an impetus for future scholarly work on the "new" third generation as it reaches adulthood in both the U.S. and Western Europe. It is incumbent on

future research to ascertain and explain the major trends we have identified, and precisely measure the extent of immigrant inclusion in socioeconomic (and other) dimensions by the third generation.

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Endnotes

[i] "Ouvriers" includes professions such as factory workers, cooks, stonemasons, bus drivers, agricultural workers. "Employés" include professions such as office workers, hospital workers, sales workers, firemen, domestic workers. More information on occupational measures are available in Appendix B.

[ii] While entrepreneurship and self-employment are important forms of labor market participation, we do not include self-employment as an outcome in our analysis. The employment information available for the adult children of respondents does not allow us to identify self-employed individuals. Moreover, the self-employed population in France is extremely heterogeneous, ranging from farmers and artisans to platform workers and high-earning entrepreneurs. Available evidence shows that the majority of self-employed individuals—including descendants of immigrants—are concentrated in low-prestige and often precarious occupations. In particular, descendants of immigrants from Turkey and North Africa are overrepresented among "auto-entrepreneurs," a status that facilitates entry into self-employment but is frequently associated with low income and job insecurity (Meurs, Ichou, and Valat forthcoming). Given these constraints, self-employment lies beyond the scope of our current analysis.

[iii] For holding a university degree, we restrict our analytical sample to those aged at least 21. For holding an executive or professional job, we restrict it to those aged 23 and over. For being unemployed, we do not distinguish between those actively looking for a job and those who are not but we exclude those still studying.

[iv] In cases where there are several non-French ancestries, we code ethnic (national) origins according to the father's. For the parents of our second-generation individuals, we code their origins according to their father's origin if it conflicts with that of their mother's. For third-generation individuals who have several immigrant grandparents born in different countries, the order of priority to identify their origins is the following: paternal grandfather, paternal grandmother, and maternal grandfather.

[v] Additionally, our generational variables follow a "strict" approach to nativity insofar as we do not count main respondents who came to France very young (for instance before the age of three) as second generation. We do so in a companion study (Ferry et al. forthcoming) for technical reasons and mechanically increase the relative share of third-generation individuals with 4 immigrant grandparents as a result, for instance from approximately 15% in the present study to 40% in our companion study among those of North African origins. We refer readers to Appendix B for further detail.

[vi] Supplementary analyses differentiating different types of mixedness in the ancestral generations – specifically, distinguishing among G1 parents (main respondents) between those with a native versus a G2 partner yielded substantively identical results. These analyses are available upon request. We thank one of the ESR reviewers for suggesting to disaggregate the children of mixed parents based on ancestral mixedness.