First-generation Immigrants Feel Socially Excluded and Have Greater Pro-violence Attitudes than the Native Population in England and Wales

**Introduction**

In understanding risk factors for violence and exploring between-group differences, the main variables studied are gender and ethnicity. Farrington and his colleagues (2003) proposed that known risk factors for violence may be experienced more by certain ethnic groups than by others; these factors are personal and social characteristics of an individual that predict a high probability of violence (Lösel and Farrington, 2012). In the UK, for example, individuals who identified as belonging to a Black or Minority ethnicity (BME) had significantly different experiences of victimization, fear of crime, and the criminal justice system than non-BME individuals (Kautt, 2010, p. 251; Webster, 2007). Similar to the observation of Farrington et al. (2003) for different ethnic groups, the prevalence and impact of risk factors may be experienced differently among different immigrant generations (see Titzmann et al., 2008).

The present study investigates risk factors that contribute to the relationship between immigrant generational status and violence in the UK, and whether perceptions play a mediating role in this relationship. No study has investigated this relationship in the British context, as the bulk of research and theories on immigrants and crime are from America. The UK is home to diverse groups of immigrants. According to the Office for National Statistics (2013), 500,000 new immigrants arrived in the UK between September 2011 and September 2012, and of that population 105,000 were citizens from new commonwealth countries. In addition, the 2011 UK census showed that 7.5 million (13%) of residents of England and Wales were foreign-born. Thus, studying the immigrant-crime relationship and understanding the risk factors for violence within the British context will allow the identification of differences and similarities compared with American research, whilst contributing knowledge to the existing literature.

The majority of studies on generational status and crime are based on American samples. The studies that have examined differences in immigrant generational groups for violence have established that first-generation immigrants[[1]](#footnote-1) have lower rates of violence, crime, and arrest than the native-born population (Bersani, 2014a; Harris and Feldmeyer, 2013; Morenoff and Astor, 2006; Sampson et al., 2005). But second and subsequent generations were more criminally involved than their parents (Hagan et al., 2008; Jennings et al., 2013; Rumbaut et al., 2006). Research has also shown that the level of criminal involvement among second-generation immigrants is comparable to that of the general native-born population (Bersani et al., 2014). Not only do first-generation immigrants have lower crime and violence levels, but scholars have additionally found that being a first-generation immigrant was protective against criminality (Lee and Martinez, 2009; Sampson, 2008). Though first and second generation immigrants differ in violence levels, they both must deal with the challenges of adapting and assimilating into the mainstream culture. The next section will discuss the immigrant experience, in brief, and how it may affect both first and second generation immigrants and their risks for violence.

##### *The immigrant experience*

##### Research has demonstrated that acculturation and its outcomes differ for different immigrant groups (Birman et al., 2005). Acculturation refers to the process by which immigrants gradually adapt their language, behaviours, beliefs, and values because of contact with the mainstream culture (Wang et al., 2012; Yoon et al., 2011). The ease and pace at which immigrants acculturate is dependent on language, education, economic opportunities, and/or skin colour. Skin colour is an issue because groups that have distinctive phenotypes may experience more discrimination because they are easily identifiable as an “out-group” (Nagasawa et al., 2001). Vigil (2008, p. 58) noted that Mexican-American immigrants who appeared more European had an easier time acculturating in the US than those who appeared distinctively different. But whether immigrants from Asia and Latin America face unique challenges compared to European immigrants from earlier generations in the US is still debated (Xie and Greenman, 2011).

##### According to Hopkins (2011), in the UK and US, ethnic background and immigrant status are closely related. Studies on racial discrimination and its influence on ethnic minority groups are relevant to generational status as appearance does play a role. Sanders-Phillips (2009) argued that racial discrimination is a form of violence because it occurs on multiple levels and negatively impacts mental health and youth development. Further, it creates feelings of exclusion and anger that hinder successful social integration and achievement of goals. Even if hostile attitudes are not expressed as physical acts towards ethnic minority groups, they may significantly affect social and economic integration and may lead to reactive and maladaptive coping for these groups and their offspring (Dustman et al., 2004). Consequently, even if offences against ethnic minorities are not intended to be racially motivated, the minorities may see these offences as such (Bowling, 1993). The disadvantages of being an ethnic minority coupled with the risks for violence from the immigrant experience are particular challenges for both first and second generation immigrants. The possible shared risks between first and second generation immigrants, however, do not adequately explain why differences between generations in violence levels exist. Several theories and studies have investigated the reasons for these generational differences.

*Reasons for the differences in violence between first and second generation immigrants*

The low rate of violence by first-generation immigrants was particularly unexpected because many first-generation immigrants and their families settled in deprived inner-city neighbourhoods in which encounters with marginalized native minorities were commonplace (Portes and Zhou, 1993). The increased risks for violence from residing in this type of social environment have been established in the criminological literature, and these risk factors include having delinquent peers, poverty, availability of drugs and firearms, community disorganization, exposure to violence and racial prejudice, and neighbourhood adults involved in crime (Farrington, 2001; Wilson et al., 2000). Despite these risks, Sampson and Bean (2006) coined the term “the Latino Paradox” to the finding that Latino first-generation immigrants seemed to be resistant to contextual criminogenic risks; this finding was also applicable to all other first-generation immigrant groups. The reasons for the resistance lay in the ties to the culture of origin and the fact that new immigrants had a continued shared heritage and a reinforced common language, traditions, and values (Feldmeyer, 2009; Harris and Feldmeyer, 2013).

Although the majority of empirical evidence indicates relatively lower levels of violence and crime for first-generation immigrants, within this group, particular ethnicities may behave differently. For example, Powell et al. (2010) examined delinquency in adolescents as they transitioned into adulthood, and found that delinquency levels were consistently lower among first-generation immigrants except for Asian first-generation immigrant females. If ties to the culture of origin and shared heritage are protective against the harmful effects of the urban social environment, which increases the risk of violence, it would be assumed that these factors would also be beneficial to the second-generation offspring. But why would there be generational differences in levels of violence?

Portes and Zhou (1993), in their segmented assimilation theory, proposed that second-generation immigrants were confronted with the particular challenge of negotiating between their first-generation parents’ culture and mainstream American culture. Consequently, those who were able to successfully balance between these two cultures would experience upward assimilation, progressing in social mobility. But those who failed to achieve a balance would experience downward assimilation, descending into deviant subcultures that existed within their deprived communities (Portes et al., 2009). The extra burden of navigating between two cultures made second-generation immigrants more susceptible to risks for violence.

Scholars have recognized the protective influence of immigrant communities and neighbourhoods against violence, including for second-generation immigrants (Lee and Martinez, 2002; Portes, 1995). The positive support and networks, including the strong cultural identities and familial bonds, acted as a buffer against negative environmental effects (Bui, 2009; Rumbaut, 1997). Previous research has found that a good bond to role model or parental type figures can protect against risks for violence (Lösel and Farrington, 2012; Werner and Smith, 2001). Through the supportive networks, immigrant communities provide extended parental and familial ties. In their case study of Vietnamese-American youth in an immigrant community, Zhou and Bankston (1994) concluded that second-generation youth who had traditional family values, a strong work ethic, and ethnic community involvement were more likely to have positive adaptation experiences because they were successfully integrated into their community and tapped into its resources. But scholars have also found increased risks for second-generation youth within these immigrant communities.

Gangs and violence also emerged within these immigrant communities. In understanding the appearance of Vietnamese-American youth gangs, Hong (2010) concluded that the feeling of marginalization from the community, the larger context, and the different features of second-generation immigrant youths’ lives had significant cumulative risks for gang involvement. For instance, parent-child conflicts, because of differing cultural systems resulting from different acculturation experiences, was predictive of serious violence in second-generation immigrant youth (Le and Stockdale, 2008). Additionally, deviant peers is an established risk factor for violence, but DiPietro and McGloin (2012) found that, compared to native-born youth, first and second-generation immigrant youth were more susceptible to criminality when exposed to deviant peers.

According to Kubrin and Ishizawa (2012), not all immigrant communities functioned as protective, as their findings showed that some of these communities experienced higher levels of crime and violence. These findings support segmented assimilation theory as it recognizes the differences in assimilation paths and the diversity of communities in which new immigrant families settle. The higher level of violence in second-generation immigrants may also be influenced by their negative perceptions towards the host society.

*The influence of negative perceptions towards the host society on violence*

Perceptions of host institutions may be influential in contributing to the higher violence levels of second-generation immigrants. Specifically, negative perceptions, such as anti-establishment attitudes, have been shown to be predictive of persistent offending (Farrington and Hawkins, 1991; Farrington et al., 2009). In investigating perceptions of police legitimacy and discrimination in African-Americans, Lee et al. (2010) concluded that ethnic identity influenced the perceptions of police prejudice. As previously mentioned, ethnic background is related to generational status and these findings show the extent of influence that ethnic background and the experiences that accompany it can have.

Unlike first-generation immigrants, the environmental and social risks of living in a deprived community and having poor support networks may aggravate the negative acculturation experiences of second-generation immigrants. Bucerius (2011, p. 394) noted that crime involvement for second-generation immigrants may be understood through the increases in perceptions of discrimination, marginalization, disempowerment, and social exclusion (Bersani, 2014b; Turjeman et al., 2008). Perceptions are powerful in their ability to motivate individuals to behave antisocially, and they may be important factors in understanding the between-group differences in violence between first and second-generation immigrants.

Exactly how negative perceptions towards the host society function to promote violence for second-generation immigrants is unclear. Perhaps these perceptions develop a justification for violence involvement. The literature on street gangs has observed that negative perceptions, specifically alienation stemming from racism and a pervasive alienated status, increased risk for gang affiliation and a gang lifestyle which was accepting of violence (Hong, 2010). The pathway from negative perceptions towards actual violence may be mediated by pro-violence attitudes. These attitudes, characterized by the acceptance and support of violence, are an established risk factor for actual violence (Hawkins et al., 1998; Herrenkohl et al., 2000; West and Farrington, 1977). Generally, attitudes that are supportive of law-breaking are stable covariates of offending (Akers and Sellers, 2004; Pauwels and Svensson, 2013).

Pro-violence attitudes have been shown to be evident in serious, violent, and chronic offenders and predicted their reoffending (Baglivio et al., 2014). Further, Wikström and Svensson (2008) believed that the higher level of youth violence in England compared to Sweden could be partly explained by the population general attitudes that were supportive of violence in settling disputes and responding to provocations. Although pro-violence attitudes have not been an important risk factor studied in violence research, there is substantial evidence that shows that they are related to actual violence (e.g., West and Farrington, 1977), and may be the mechanism through which negative perceptions are linked to violence.

*Key Questions*

The present study measures relevant risk factors for violence to focus on whether negative perceptions may contribute to understanding the between-generations differences in violence. Based on the literature, it is theorized that pro-violence attitudes would be related to and be higher in second-generation immigrants than first-generation immigrants, and that negative perceptions would mediate the relationship between pro-violence attitudes and violence. The key questions addressed in this research are the following:

1. Are pro-violence attitudes greater for second-generation immigrants than for first-generation immigrants?
2. Do negative perceptions mediate the relationship between generational status and pro-violent attitudes, considering other factors related to acculturation?
3. If so, which type of negative perception specifically mediates this relationship?

**Methodology**

Information to answer the key questions was taken from the 2010-2011 UK Citizenship Survey (Communities Study; Department for Communities and Local Government and Ipsos MORI, 2012). The purposes of this national government survey was to interview participants face-to-face and gather information on collective efficacy, racial, ethnic and religious harassment, race equality, and social networks. The survey was initiated by the Home Office and comprised 3 subsamples: (1) the main representative sample (N=10,307) of adults in England and Wales, ages 16 and over and (2) two additional booster samples. The objective of the booster samples was to oversample ethnic minorities (N=5,563) and Muslims (N=1,096). Together, the overall sample was 16,966 respondents. After 2001, the Citizenship Survey was undertaken every two years and was a repeated cross-sectional design. The study, however, concluded in March 2011.

##### The present study examines only respondents in the main sample, and thus weights[[2]](#footnote-2) were not needed. The sample contained British citizens, comprising 2,773 (46.7%) males and 3,165 (53.3%) females, totalling 5,938. The reason that the sample was reduced from 10,307 to 5,938 was the age range selected for analysis in this paper was from 16 to 40 (average age= 29.7). This age range was selected to ensure that the generational groups had comparable sample sizes. The majority of the sample comprised Caucasians (N=2,403, 40.5%), followed by Asians[[3]](#footnote-3) (N=2,058, 34.7%) and Blacks (N=829, 14.0%). Table 1 displays additional information about the sample.

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION FOR PRESENT STUDY SAMPLE

##### *Measures*

##### As risk factors are examined, all measures were dichotomized to represent whether respondents were at a high or low risk on a particular factor. If more than one item comprised a measure, the sum of these items was used to produce a mean score. Subsequently, all scores were dichotomized so that a score of 1 meant the top 25% (dichotomized as close as possible) and a score of 0 represented the remaining 75%. Factors that were inherently dichotomized were coded so that high risk would be indicated with a 1 and low risk would be indicated with a 0.

##### Outcome

*Pro-violence attitudes****:*** the item measuring pro-violence attitudes asked respondents whether it was okay to use violence to protest against things that were unfair or unjust. This item was scored from (1) always wrong, (2) often wrong, (3) sometimes right, sometimes wrong, (4) often right, and (5) always right.

##### Explanatory variable

##### *Generational status:* Similar to the method used in the literature on immigrants (Rumbaut and Ewing, 2007), generational status was determined by information on the country of birth of the respondent and his/her parents. Generational status was derived from two questions: (1) whether the respondent was born in the UK and (2) whether the respondents’ parents were born in the UK. Those who responded that they and their parents were not born in the UK were categorized as first-generation immigrants (N=2,261, 37.9%); those who responded that they were born in the UK but had at least one parent who was not were categorized as second-generation immigrants (N=993, 16.63%); those who responded that they and their parents were both born in the UK were categorized as native-born (N=2,716, 45.5%).

Mediators

*Negative Perceptions:* From the literature review, measures thought to represent perceptions of discrimination, marginalization, disempowerment, and social exclusion as noted by Bucerius (2011) were investigated:

1. *Exclusion* (α=0.66)*.* Two items were used to form the exclusion measure. These items asked respondents whether they agreed that they personally felt a part of British society and how strongly did they feel they belonged to Britain. The most negative response (i.e. strongly disagree/ not strongly at all) was given the highest score (scale range: 1-4).

2. *No Influence* (α=0.72)*.* This measure assesses whether the respondent felt that he/she could influence decisions affecting (a) Britain and (b) the local area. Choices of the coded responses for both items were either (1) Yes or (2) No.

3. *Mistrust in Police.* This item asks respondents whether they trust the police (1) a lot, (2) a fair amount, (3) not very much and (4) not at all.

*4. Fear of Crime.* This item asked how worried respondents were about becoming a victim of crime. The item scale was (1) not at all worried (2) not very worried (3) fairly worried and (4) very worried.

*Control Variables*

Seven control variables were included in the analyses, in two categories: demographic (ethnicity, gender, and age) and acculturation experience (co-ethnic friends, English language, harassment, and neighbourhood dissatisfaction) variables.

1. *Ethnicity:* Four dummy variables were created to represent White, Black, Asian, and Mixed races.

2. *Gender*: Males were coded as 1 and females were coded as 0.

3. *Age:* Respondents who self-reported that their age ranged from 16-25 was coded as 1 and the remainder (26-40) were coded 0. The age range 16-25 represented young adult versus older adult age.

4. *Harassment* (α= 0.71)*:* this measure comprised the following 4 items: (1)“How much of a problem is racial or religious harassment in this area?”; (2) “How worried are you about being subject to a physical attack because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion?”; (3) “Thinking about anything that has happened in this local area, have you personally experienced harassment because of your skin colour, ethnic origin or religion in the last two years?” and (4) “In this local area, how much of a problem is racial or religious harassment even if it doesn’t affect you personally?”

*5. Different ethnic friends*: The item “What proportion of your friends are of the same ethnic group as you?” was used to assess whether the respondents’ friends were either (a) all the same, (b) more than half, (c) about half or (d) less than half; those who responded either (c) or (d) were coded as 1.

*6. English*: This item assessed whether the respondents indicated that their main language was English (Yes=0 and No=1)

*7. Neighbourhood dissatisfaction* (α=0.72): The following items were combined to measure neighbourhood dissatisfaction: how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?; how strongly do you belong to the neighbourhood ; how strongly do you belong to the local area? The scale for all three items was from 1 (very strongly) to 4 (not at all strongly).

*Plan of analysis*

Logistic regressions were primarily used to assess the unadjusted and adjusted strength of each relationship. The odds ratio (OR) was used as a measure of relationship strength. The benefits of using ORs are that they are not subject to ceiling effects, nor are their predictive efficiencies affected by changes in row or column totals (Farrington and Loeber, 2000). The purpose of this analysis was to examine to what extent generational status, controlling for other demographic variables, was related to pro-violence attitudes. The OR also assessed the strength of the adjusted relationships between negative perceptions and pro-violence attitudes.

To assess the strength of prospective mediators between generational status and pro-violence attitudes, bootstrapping was used. Instead of the Sobel test, Preacher and Hayes (2008) suggested bootstrapping as a more precise estimate of mediation. Bootstrapping determines the significance of indirect effects through confidence intervals. This technique estimates the properties of the sampling distribution from the sample data by taking smaller samples from the data called “bootstrap samples”. The averages of these bootstrap samples are calculated and by taking many bootstrap samples, an estimation of the sampling distribution is produced (Field, 2009, p. 163). This approximation of the sampling distribution allows for the construction of confidence intervals for the indirect effect (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). This method is based on 5,000 bootstrapping resamples with a 95% confidence interval. If zero (0) is contained within the confidence interval, the indirect effect is non-significant.

**Results**

*Relationship between generational status and pro-violence*

First, we establish whether generational status is significantly related to pro-violence attitudes. Table 2 reveals that 9.1% of first-generation immigrants have pro-violence attitudes compared to second (7.8%) generation immigrants and native-born persons (7.2%). Additionally, zero-order relationships show that being a first-generation immigrant was significantly and positively related to pro-violence attitudes (OR=1.26, CI=1.04-1.52), whereas being native-born was inversely related to pro-violence attitudes (OR=0.82, CI=0.68-0.99).

TABLE 2. PREVALENCE AND STRENGTH OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENERATIONAL STATUS AND PRO-VIOLENCE ATTITUDES

When adjusting for these relationships, there was a significant difference between first- generation and native-born groups (z-score=2.42). Because there were non- significant differences for the second-generation group, this group was excluded from further analyses;

the subsequent analyses examined differences in pro-violence between only the first-generation and native-born groups (N=4,949). Thus, the variable, *first-generation,* refers to whether the respondent is a first-generation immigrant (1) or native-born (0).

In Table 3, the prevalence of each risk/protective factor is presented within first-generation immigrants (N=2,238) and native-born individuals (N=2,711). Compared to the native-born, first-generation immigrants are predominantly Asian (51.3% vs. 7.5%) and Black (22.6% vs. 5.2%); the majority of this group (56.1%) self-reported a language other than English as their main language. First-generation immigrants self-reported a higher prevalence in harassment (57.0% vs. 30.1%), exclusion (17.4% vs. 15.8%), and being fearful of becoming a victim of crime (15.2% vs. 7.2%), whereas the Native-born group self-reported a higher prevalence of distrusting the police (19.9% vs. 15.8%) and neighbourhood dissatisfaction (34.2% vs. 33.0%: not significant). For each risk factor, there were significant differences between the two groups with the exception of neighbourhood dissatisfaction.

As mentioned earlier, research on criminological risk factors for between-group differences in violence seldom investigate generational status. Rather, ethnicity, age, and gender are studied prominently. To examine the extent to which generational status is related to pro-violence attitudes, Table 4 includes only the significant zero-order relationships between demographic factors and pro-violence attitudes in an adjusted model. Three significant risk factors (first-generation, adolescent age, and ethnicity) were simultaneously included into a logistic regression model. Being a first-generation immigrant (OR=1.39, CI=1.03-1.88) was significantly related to pro-violence attitudes. Being adolescent-aged (OR=1.96, CI=1.58-2.42) was also an important covariate.

TABLE 3. PREVALENCE AND STRENGTH OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RISK FACTORS AND FIRST-GENERATION IMMIGRANT STATUS VERSUS NATIVE-BORN (N=4,949)

TABLE 4. ADJUSTED RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PRO-VIOLENCE ATTITUDES AND RISK FACTORS

*Mediation*

To identify possible mediators, especially within negative perceptions, Table 5 uses Baron and Kenny’s (1986) mediation framework. In order to establish mediation between first generation and violent attitudes, the following four conditions need to be met: (1) being a first-generation immigrant should be related to pro-violence attitudes; (2) being a first-generation immigrant should be related to the prospective mediator; (3) the prospective meditator should be related to pro-violence attitudes, controlling for being a first-generation

immigrant; and (4) the strength of relationship between being a first-generation immigrant and pro-violence attitudes controlling for the possible mediator.

In Step 1, being a first-generation immigrant is significantly related to pro-violence attitudes (OR=1.29. CI=1.05-1.58). In Step 2, there are significant relationships between being a first-generation immigrant and the following 7 factors: having a high proportion of different ethnic friends (OR=3.80, CI=3.35-4.32), having a non-English main language (OR=39.04, CI=31.00-49.16), experiencing harassment (OR=3.08. CI=2.73-3.46), feeling excluded (OR=1.60, CI=1.36-1.88), having no influence (OR=0.71, CI=0.64-0.80), distrusting the police (OR=0.76, CI=0.65-0.88), and a fear of becoming a victim of crime (OR=2.31, CI=1.92-2.78). All four negative perceptions and harassment were significant. But having no influence and distrusting the police were negatively associated with being a first-generation immigrant.

In Step 3, after controlling for being a first-generation immigrant, feeling excluded (OR=1.42, CI=1.09-1.85) and mistrust in the police (OR=2.11, CI=1.68-2.66) were significantly related to pro-violence attitudes. Lastly, in Step 4, the strength of being a first-generation immigrant was reduced when controlling for feeling excluded (OR=1.26, CI=1.02-1.55) and fearing becoming a victim of crime (OR=1.27, CI=1.03-1.56). When adjusting for different ethnic friends, neighbourhood dissatisfaction, having no influence, and mistrust in the police, the relationship between being a first-generation immigrant and having violent attitudes was significant, but these possible mediators did not reduce the strength of the effect. Based on these findings, the only mediator that qualified according to the Baron and Kenny framework was feeling excluded.

TABLE 5. POSSIBLE MEDIATORS BETWEEN FIRST-GENERATION IMMIGRANT STATUS AND PRO-VIOLENCE ATTITUDES

To confirm these findings, the bootstrapping method was used. Table 6 shows that the indirect, direct, and total effects of the relationship between being a first-generation immigrant, perceived exclusion, and having violent attitudes were significant. The reason is that 0 was not contained within the 95% CI (using the bias corrected and accelerated [BCA]). The strength of these effects, however, was small.

TABLE 6. FEELING EXCLUDED AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN FIRST-GENERATION IMMIGRANT STATUS AND PRO-VIOLENCE ATTITUDES (N=4.949)

##### Discussion

##### The purpose of the present study was to investigate (1) whether differences in violence levels between different immigrant generational statuses could be explained by reference to differences in negative perceptions and pro-violence attitudes and (2) whether previous findings are applicable to the British context.

##### Informed by the literature, we had theorized that the relationship between negative perceptions and pro-violence attitudes would be significant for second-generation immigrants, and that pro-violence attitudes would be higher in this group compared to the first-generation immigrants. But our main findings showed the exact opposite: first-generation immigrants had a higher prevalence of pro-violence attitudes. Further, feeling excluded from British society mediated this relationship. The unexpected finding contradicts previous findings that have consistently found that second-generation immigrants have higher violence levels and suffer from more risks for violence than first-generation immigrants.

##### From their study of violence among Southeast Asian and Chinese youth, Spencer and Le (2006) concluded that parents’ traumatic refugee experiences, particularly among the Vietnamese, were felt indirectly by their children and promoted their children’s engagement in serious violence. Although attitudes supporting violence are associated with actual violence, the present finding suggests that, as a group, first-generation immigrants have negative perceptions towards the host society, and as a result, harbour violent attitudes. But they do not commit violence possibly because the protective effects of culture and community are stronger for this group than for the second-generation immigrants. But as first and second generation immigrants both struggle with similar acculturation experiences, first-generation immigrant attitudes may fuel second-generation immigrant feelings of frustration, alienation, and anger, and the propensity to engage in actual violence. Pro-violence attitudes may not matter for second-generation immigrant violence, but they matter for first-generation immigrants and may indirectly affect the subsequent generation.

##### Previous studies have demonstrated that parents’ anti-social beliefs and attitudes favourable to violence increase their children’s risk for crime and violence involvement (Farrington, 2001; Hill et al., 1999; Wilson et al., 2000). But particularly for second-generation immigrants, the influence of this risk factor may be stronger than for other generational groups. DiPietro and McGloin (2012) observed that compared to non-immigrant youth, second-generation immigrant youth were faced with greater demands to help their parents with language barriers and to navigate American culture. In addition, they took on more adult responsibility (Portes and Zhou, 1993). Consequently, second-generation immigrant youth may spend more time in their parents’ “shoes,” understanding their daily struggles and burdens. Empathizing with their parents may make second-generation immigrants more susceptible to their parents’ attitudes because they are privy to their parents’ perspectives.

##### Combined with second-generation immigrants’ own struggles, this intergenerational transmission of violence may progress from attitudes to action, and may heighten the risk of violence. It may partly explain the differences in violence levels between first and second generation immigrant groups. But although the overall relationship between first-generation immigrant status, perceived exclusion, and pro-violence attitudes was small, it is established knowledge that pro-violence attitudes are predictive of actual violence.

##### The small effect size suggests that this relationship may not be as important as other relationships relating to acculturation such as parent-child cultural conflicts, delinquent peers, and community disadvantages. What this relationship does show is that it is one small explanation in understanding the complex dynamics and interactions that produce the observed differences in violence between these generational immigrant groups. Few studies have investigated negative perceptions for immigrant groups. Many studies on acculturation and delinquency, for example, do not consider the actual process and do not investigate the mechanisms of acculturation that lead to criminal involvement; it is important to understand what are successful and unsuccessful processes and their consequences for violence (Nagasawa et al., 2001).

##### The significance in young adult age and its stronger relationship to pro-violence attitudes merits further investigation. Additionally, research investigating segmented assimilation theory and acculturation phenomena tend to have in mind first-generation immigrant parents and their second-generation immigrant children; gang membership and violence are also youth and immigrant community problems. Compared to first-generation immigrant status, young adult age may be more of a factor relating to pro-violence attitudes because, overall, when considering the total population, teenagers and adolescents are at more risk to develop pro-violent attitudes and act on them. This may explain why first-generation immigrants do not commit violence because they tend to be older than second-generation immigrants.

##### *Policy implications and future directions*

##### The present findings show the importance of understanding the mechanisms of acculturation, and how they affect both first and second generation immigrants. Despite the small effect size between first-generation immigrant status, perceived exclusion, and pro-violence attitudes, the study contributes knowledge other possible mechanisms through which violence risk is increased in immigrant groups and how these mechanisms may operate in a context outside of the US, where this type of research has mainly been conducted.

##### From the findings, researchers and policy-makers aiming to improve immigrant communities and prevent violence within these communities will benefit from understanding the parental influences on immigrant children and the factors that improve these relationships. In these particular communities, parents and the surrounding community network provide support and bonds. Strengthening these bonds and creating culturally-sensitive means to access societal resources would reduce feelings of exclusion. Examples of culturally sensitive means would be accessible and affordable health care and mental health clinics where doctors and clinicians speak the immigrant community’s language and understand their cultural norms and beliefs. Another example is job centres that are considerate of the individual’s immigration circumstances. These institutions could provide better support for immigrant communities, reducing the burdens of acculturation for first-generation immigrants, and reduce perceived exclusion from the host society.

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##### *Limitations*

The primary limitations of this study are its cross-sectional design and the lack of a measure of actual violence. A longitudinal design that follows first-generation immigrant parents and their subsequent generations would have been ideal as it would establish whether pro-violence attitudes are transmitted from first-generation immigrant parent to second-generation immigrant child. With the current design, it is difficult to conclude with certainty that attitudes are passed down to second-generation immigrants.

Additionally, a measure of actual violence was missing from our study. This was because the Citizenship Survey did not include items measuring violence. Thus, the study can not state for certain that pro-violence attitudes are directly related to violent acts. The previous literature, however, has shown evidence that attitudes favourable to violence are related to actual violence. It could also be suggested that pro-violence attitudes are used as a proxy for actual violence. But as the measure comprised only 1-item, there must be great caution in interpreting the results. More research is needed to replicate and elaborate upon these findings.

##### *Conclusions*

##### As diversity is becoming a more common occurrence within societies, criminology must address differences in criminological phenomena between diverse groups. These between-group differences extend beyond gender and ethnic groups, and must consider aspects of culture and immigration (Junger-Tas, 2001). Immigration and immigrant groups are found in various societies. How these groups adapt and change, and how known risks for violence interact with their unique experiences, are important concerns to address in diverse and modern societies. Further investigation and replication of the present research will give better insight into the prevention of violence within immigrant communities.

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| Table 1. Descriptive information for present study sample (N=5,938) | | | | | |
|  |  | N |  | % |  |
| *Generational status* | |  |  |  |  |
| First |  | 2, 238 |  | 37.69 |  |
| Second |  | 989 |  | 16.66 |  |
| Native |  | 2,711 |  | 45.66 |  |
| *Gender* |  |  |  |  |  |
| Male |  | 2,773 |  | 46.7 |  |
| Female |  | 3,165 |  | 53.3 |  |
| *Ethnicity* |  |  |  |  |  |
| Asian |  | 2,058 |  | 34.66 |  |
| Caucasian |  | 2,403 |  | 40.47 |  |
| Black |  | 829 |  | 13.96 |  |
| Other |  | 648 |  | 10.91 |  |
| Age M(SD), range | | 29.72(6.85) |  | 16-40 |  |
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| Table 2. Prevalence and strength of relationship between generational status and pro-violence attitudes | | | | | | | | |  |
|  |  | N |  | N and % Pro-violent |  | OR (95% CI) |  | Difference in OR (z-score) | |
| *Generational status* | |  |  |  |  |  |  | vs. 2nd | vs. Native-born |
| First |  | 2, 238 |  | 204(9.12) |  | 1.26(1.04-1.52)\* |  | 1.19(1.23) | 1.29(2.42)\* |
| Second |  | 989 |  | 77(7.79) |  | 0.96(0.74-1.24) |  |  | 1.08(0.57) |
| Native-born |  | 2,711 |  | 196(7.23) |  | 0.82(0.68-0.99)\* |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| \*p<.05 | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| Table 3. Prevalence and strength of relationship between risk factors and first-generation immigrant status versus native-born (N=4,949) | | | | | | | | |
|  | N(%) of first-generation |  | N(%) of native-born |  | OR\* |  | 95% CI |  |
| **Demographics** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Male | 1,101(49.20) |  | 1,196(44.12) |  | 1.23 |  | 1.10-1.37 |  |
| Adolescent age | 508(22.70) |  | 884(32.61) |  | 0.61 |  | 0.53-0.69 |  |
| *Ethnicity* |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| White | 184(8.22) |  | 2,190(80.78) |  | 0.02 |  | 0.02-0.03 |  |
| Asian | 1,149(51.34) |  | 204(7.52) |  | 12.97 |  | 10.99-15.29 |  |
| Black | 506(22.61) |  | 140(5.16) |  | 5.37 |  | 4.41-6.53 |  |
| Other | 399(17.83) |  | 177(6.53) |  | 3.11 |  | 2.58-3.74 |  |
| **Lifestyle** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Friends from different ethnic group | 1,063(47.50) |  | 521(19.22) |  | 3.80 |  | 3.35-4.32 |  |
| Non-English main language | 1,256(56.12) |  | 86(3.17) |  | 39.04 |  | 31.00-49.16 |  |
| Neighbourhood dissatisfaction | 739(33.02) |  | 926(34.16) |  | 0.95 |  | 0.84-1.07 |  |
| Harassment | 1,276(57.02) |  | 817(30.14) |  | 3.07 |  | 2.73-3.46 |  |
| **Negative perceptions** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Exclusion | 390(17.43) |  | 316(11.66) |  | 1.60 |  | 1.36-1.88 |  |
| No Influence | 1,085(48.48) |  | 1,545(56.99) |  | 0.71 |  | 0.63-0.79 |  |
| Mistrust in police | 354(15.82) |  | 538(19.85) |  | 0.76 |  | 0.65-0.88 |  |
| Fear of crime | 341(15.24) |  | 196(7.23) |  | 2.31 |  | 1.92-2.78 |  |
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\*all odds ratios (OR) were significant at the p<.001 level except for neighbourhood dissatisfaction

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| Table 4. Adjusted relationships between pro-violence attitudes and risk factors | | | | | |
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| **Risk Factor** |  | B | SE | OR | 95% CI |
| First-generation | | 0.332 | 0.153 | 1.39\* | 1.03-1.88 |
| Adolescent age | | 0.673 | 0.109 | 1.96\*\*\* | 1.58-2.42 |
| Ethnicity✚ |  |  |  |  |  |
| Asian |  | -0.004 | 0.171 | 0.99 | 0.71-1.39 |
| Black |  | -0.016 | 0.194 | 0.98 | 0.67-1.44 |
| Other |  | 0.01 | 0.192 | 1.01 | 0.69-1.47 |
| \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001 | |  |  |  |  |
| ✚White as reference category | | |  |  |  |

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| Table 5. Possible mediators between first-generation immigrant status and pro-violence attitudes | |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Step | Risk/protective factor | B | SE | OR | 95% CI |
| 1 | First (1st) -> pro-violence attitudes | 0.252 | 0.104 | 1.29\* | 1.05-1.58 |
| 2 | 1st -> Different ethnic friends | 1.336 | 0.065 | 3.80\*\*\* | 3.35-4.32 |
|  | 1st -> Non-English main language | 3.665 | 0.118 | 39.04\*\*\* | 31.00-49.16 |
|  | 1st -> Neighbourhood dissatisfaction | -0.051 | 0.061 | 0.95 | 0.84-1.07 |
|  | 1st -> Harassment | 1.123 | 0.06 | 3.08\*\*\* | 2.73-3.46 |
|  | 1st -> Exclusion | 0.47 | 0.082 | 1.60\*\*\* | 1.36-1.88 |
|  | 1st -> No Influence | -0.342 | 0.057 | 0.71\*\*\* | 0.64-0.80 |
|  | 1st -> Mistrust in police | -0.276 | 0.075 | 0.76\*\*\* | 0.65-0.88 |
|  | 1st -> Fear of crime | 0.836 | 0.095 | 2.31\*\*\* | 1.92-2.78 |
| 3 | Different ethnic friends -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. 1st) | -0.008 | 0.116 | 0.99 | 0.79-1.25 |
|  | Non-English main language -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. 1st) | 0.26 | 0.14 | 1.30 | 0.98-1.71 |
|  | Neighbourhood dissatisfaction -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. 1st) | 0.081 | 0.109 | 1.08 | 0.88-1.34 |
|  | Harassment -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. 1st) | 0.185 | 0.109 | 1.2 | 0.97-1.49 |
|  | Exclusion -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. 1st) | 0.351 | 0.135 | 1.42\*\* | 1.09-1.85 |
|  | No Influence -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. 1st) | 0.004 | 0.105 | 1.00 | 0.82-1.23 |
|  | Mistrust in police -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. 1st) | 0.748 | 0.117 | 2.11\*\*\* | 1.68-2.66 |
|  | Fear of crime -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. 1st) | 0.177 | 0.158 | 1.19 | 0.88-1.63 |
| 4 | 1st -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. different ethnic friends) | 0.254 | 0.109 | 1.29\* | 1.04-1.60 |
|  | 1st -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. non-English main language) | 0.109 | 0.132 | 1.12 | 0.86-1.44 |
|  | 1st -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. neighbourhood dissatisfaction) | 0.253 | 0.104 | 1.29\* | 1.05-1.58 |
|  | 1st -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. harassment) | 0.202 | 0.108 | 1.22 | 0.99-1.51 |
|  | 1st -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. exclusion) | 0.23 | 0.105 | 1.26\* | 1.02-1.55 |
|  | 1st -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. no Influence) | 0.253 | 0.105 | 1.29\* | 1.05-1.58 |
|  | 1st -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. mistrust in police) | 0.291 | 0.105 | 1.34\*\* | 1.09-1.64 |
|  | 1st -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. fear of crime) | 0.237 | 0.105 | 1.27\* | 1.03-1.56 |
|  | 1st -> pro-violence attitudes (cf. 6 variables) | 0.282 | 0.111 | 1.33\* | 1.07-1.65 |
| \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001 ; cf= controlling for ; CI = confidence interval | |  |  |  |  |

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| Table 6. Feeling excluded as a mediator between first-generation immigrant status and pro-violence attitudes (N=4.949) | | | | | | | | |
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|  |  |  |  |  |  | 95% CI1 |  |  |
|  | Point estimate |  | SE |  | Lower |  | Upper |  |
| **Exclusion** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Indirect | 0.009\* |  | 0.004 |  | 0.002 |  | 0.017 |  |
| Direct | 0.063\* |  | 0.029 |  | 0.006 |  | 0.120 |  |
| Total | 0.072\* |  | 0.029 |  | 0.015 |  | 0.127 |  |
| 1 bias corrected and accelerated confidence interval | | | |  |  |  |  |  |
| \* p<.05 | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

1. First generation refers to those born outside the host country with foreign-born parents; second-generation refers to those born in the host country with at least one foreign-born parent; native-born refers to those who, including their parents, were born in the host country (Rumbaut and Ewing, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Weights are applied to samples in order to account for sample bias; using them makes the sample more representative of the population. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Unlike in the US, Asians in the UK specifically refer to those of South Asian ancestry (e.g., Indians, Sri Lankans, Pakistanis, and Bangladeshis). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)