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**Ethnocultural Offenders:
An Initial Investigation of Social
History Variables at Intake**

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**Ethnocultural Offenders:
An Initial Investigation of Social History Variables at Intake**

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Executive Summary

Key words: *ethnocultural offenders, social history*

Little research specific to federally-sentenced ethnocultural offenders exists and, of what does exist, none has focused on offenders' social history. Social history – which refers to experiences of the individual, family, or community, and can also include intergenerational impacts of earlier experiences – has been recognized as important in judicial and correctional decision-making and offender management.

The current study aimed to begin to explore the issue of social history among ethnocultural offenders by leveraging readily-available data on life experiences and pre-incarceration background collected as part of the offender intake process. Data were available for 725 ethnocultural offenders in eight areas: criminal history, community functioning, education and employment, attitudes, associates, substance use, marital and family, and personal/emotional. Of the ethnocultural offenders, about half were Black and the remainder were categorized as East / South East Asian, Arab / West Asian, Hispanic / Latin, South Asian, and “other”. In order to contextualize findings specific to ethnocultural offenders, results were also provided for 2,643 White and 945 Aboriginal offenders. Results were also presented by ethnocultural subgroup.

In situating findings, it is important to note that there was as much variability within the ethnocultural population as across groups. That said, differences did emerge between the groups. In particular, ethnocultural offenders had less extensive prior criminal histories and were much less likely to be identified as having problematic substance use patterns than White and Aboriginal offenders. Taken together with results from previous research that ethnocultural offenders tend to be assessed as presenting lower levels of risk and criminogenic need, these results suggest that ethnocultural offenders may have less established criminality than their White and Aboriginal counterparts.

Results also suggested that the areas where ethnocultural offenders might most benefit from intervention may differ from those most pertinent for White and Aboriginal offenders. For instance, the rate of suspected gang affiliation among ethnocultural offenders was about twice that of White offenders while, as mentioned, rates of problematic substance were much lower among ethnocultural offenders.

Overall, the present study was among only a handful to-date to examine ethnocultural federally-sentenced offenders, and was perhaps the first to comprehensively examine previous life experiences and pre-incarceration background. As such, it contributes importantly to our understanding of this population and to our understanding of the possible role of social history factors in ethnocultural offenders' criminal offending. In addition to simply increasing knowledge, the study may also act as a spring-board in eliciting discussions and information sharing regarding both individual offenders' life experiences and possible reasons for the differences between ethnocultural, White, and Aboriginal offenders.

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Introduction

Given that they represent a small proportion of offenders in custody, ethnocultural offenders¹ have traditionally been considered as a single group. However, evidence is accumulating that offenders from different ethnic backgrounds vary considerably from one another. Ethnocultural offenders differ in terms of their criminal histories, their levels of risk, and the areas in which they require intervention in order to facilitate their eventual community reintegration. The current study was undertaken to better understand the differences among federally-sentenced ethnocultural offenders. Building on recent research (Gottschall, 2012), the current study focused on life experiences and pre-incarceration background across a number of domains, including criminal history, community functioning, education and employment, attitudes, associates, substance use, marital and family, and personal/emotional.

Challenges with Research on Ethnocultural Offenders

To date, there has been limited research focused on ethnocultural offenders. Most examinations in the area have focused on the role of ethnicity and/or race in other aspects of the criminal justice system (e.g., policing, courts; Briggs & Opsal, 2012; Brown & Sorensen, 2013; Lai & Zhao, 2010; Lundman & Kaufman, 2003; Rodriguez, 2010; Zawilski, 2010), with very little focused on individuals in the correctional system. Even when there is a desire to examine ethnocultural offenders, a number of obstacles exist. Since the late 1980s, there has been an ongoing debate in Canada regarding the appropriateness of collecting data relating to race and ethnicity in the criminal justice system (e.g., Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2012). Those who argue against such collection have stated that collecting racial or ethnic information perpetuates an inappropriate focus on race and ethnicity and that any data recorded would reflect the perception of the individual in power (e.g., police officer writing a report) rather than the individual's self-identification. Though this debate has waned, race and ethnicity data are still not routinely collected in some components of the criminal justice system; where they are, consistency in definition is lacking.

¹ An ethnocultural offender is defined as one who has specific needs based on race, language, or culture and who has a desire to preserve his or her cultural identity and practices. For the purposes of analyses, offenders who were neither White nor Aboriginal were considered.

Even when race and ethnicity information is available, conducting research focused on ethnocultural offenders is not straight-forward. It is clear that this group is diverse and that both subgroups and individuals vary in many ways, such as in terms of culture and immigration experiences (if any). Nonetheless, much of what limited research exists in the area has considered ethnocultural offenders as a single group (e.g., Neugebauer, 2000). To further complicate matters, because cultural norms and attitudes – including racism – vary, it is difficult if not impossible to apply research conducted in other jurisdictions to the Canadian context (Wortley & Owusu-Bempah, 2012).

Research on Federally-Sentenced Ethnocultural Offenders

To date, only limited research has been conducted specifically on ethnocultural offenders under CSC's jurisdiction. Moreover, of this research, some focused on the broader group of ethnocultural offenders rather than disaggregating subgroups. In one study, Zakaria (2011) contrasted White and non-White offenders, and noted that non-White men were more likely to be married than their White counterparts, and suggested that these offenders may consequently benefit from greater family support. More recently, Wilton and Power (2014) examined the program completion and dropout rates of ethnocultural offenders and found these offenders as likely to complete correctional programs as other offenders.

In terms of studies that focused on sub-groups within the ethnocultural population, the most comprehensive to date was that completed by Gottschall (2012), who examined both the representation of ethnocultural individuals within the federal offender population relative to the Canadian population and examined these offenders' characteristics. In her study, Gottschall (2012) found that certain groups of ethnocultural offenders – particularly Black and South East Asian offenders – were over-represented in correctional populations relative to the broader population. She also described differences in offences, sentences, and institutional adjustment, finding, for example, that among ethnocultural offenders, Latin American and Black offenders were most likely to be convicted of violent offences, and that Black and South Asian offenders were the most likely to be involved in institutional incidents. By and large, her findings were consistent with those in a previous examination conducted by Trevethan and Rastin (2004), though these authors grouped offenders differently.

Research has also focused on ethnocultural offenders' employment in the community after release. Nolan and Power (2013) found that South East Asian and Chinese offenders were

most likely to find employment (Nolan & Power, 2014). Finally, ethnocultural offenders admitted in 2013-14 were contrasted with White and Aboriginal offenders on their levels of risk, need, reintegration potential, and engagement (Ritchie, Gobeil, & Keown, submitted). While ethnocultural offenders were generally assessed as lower risk and need than their White and Aboriginal counterparts, differences were identified within this group as well, with Asian offenders – especially East and South East Asian offenders – less likely to be rated as having high risk and need. On the other hand, Black offenders were less likely to be rated as engaged in their correctional plans.

Social History

Clearly, research with ethnocultural offenders under CSC's supervision is still accruing, and, so far, none has focused on offenders' social history. This area has been recognized as important, and is commonly considered in the context of Aboriginal offenders (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2014; Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2013), where it is defined as "the various circumstances that have affected the lives of most Aboriginal people" (CSC, 2013a, p. 8). Social history factors can include experiences of the individual, family, or community, as well as intergenerational effects of experiences such as colonialism among Aboriginal offenders (Bombay, Matheson, & Anisman, 2009) and immigration experiences among certain ethnocultural offenders (e.g., Sampson, 2008; Tonry, 2014). Social history factors are important considerations in judicial and correctional decision-making. Moreover, their consideration may also allow for a better understanding of offenders' needs and allow for more targeted – and therefore hopefully more successful – intervention.

Indeed, greater knowledge of ethnocultural offenders' social histories, life experiences, and background prior to incarceration may contribute to CSC staff's further development of cultural competence skills. The concept of cultural competence has received increasing attention in criminal justice settings (e.g., Perlin & McClain, 2009; Primm, Osher, & Gomez, 2005), including CSC (e.g., Kabundi, Bilomba, & Meniri, 2008), and many definitions of cultural competence explicitly acknowledge the importance of greater knowledge associated with ethnocultural populations (e.g., Betancourt, Green, Carrillo, & Ananeh-Firempong, 2003; Whealin and Ruzek, 2008).

Current Study

The current study aimed to begin to explore the issue of social history by leveraging readily-available data on life experiences and pre-incarceration background collected as part of the offender intake process. Data relating to eight areas were available: criminal history, community functioning, education and employment, attitudes, associates, substance use, marital and family, and personal/emotional.

Method

Participants

The study focused on 4,313 offenders newly admitted to federal custody from April 1 2013 to March 31 2014 for whom relevant information was available. Of these, 725 were ethnocultural offenders, with Black offenders representing half of this group (see Table 1). In addition, the sample included 945 Aboriginal and 2,643 White offenders. Regardless of ethnicity, virtually all offenders (94%) were male. Most offenders (97%) were serving determinate (i.e., fixed length) sentences, though this was slightly less common amongst South Asian offenders and Hispanic / Latin offenders, of whom 89% and 92% respectively were serving determinate sentences. Consistent with this pattern, among offenders serving determinate sentences, slightly fewer South Asian, Hispanic / Latin, Arab / West Asian, and Black offenders (range: 56% to 62%) were serving sentences of less than four years, while more East or Southeast Asian, Other ethnocultural, Aboriginal, and White offenders (range: 72% to 77%) were serving these shorter sentences.

Table 1

Distribution of Ethnocultural Offenders

Category	Groups Included	Percentage	<i>N</i>
Black	Black, Sub-Saharan African, British Isles, Caribbean	51%	372
East / South East Asian	East Asian, Southeast Asian, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Filipino, Asiatic	15%	109
Arab / West Asian	Arab, Arab/West Asian, West Asian	10%	71
Hispanic / Latin	Hispanic, Latin American	8%	58
South Asian	South Asian, East Indian	7%	49
Other	Eastern European, Northern European, Southern European, Western European, French European, Multiple racial / ethnic identities, Oceania	9%	66

The study sample did not comprise all offenders admitted within the year under study. At admission, most offenders who are serving a sentence of four years or less for a non-violent offence and have limited criminal history are eligible for a compressed intake assessment (CSC, 2014a). Given the data analysed came from the full assessment, those with compressed assessments could not be included. However, it is important to acknowledge that there was a confound between ethnicity and retention for analyses. Ethnocultural offenders were somewhat more likely than their White and Aboriginal counterparts (16% versus 11% and 5%, respectively) to undergo a compressed assessment, and therefore a larger proportion of ethnocultural offenders than of White and Aboriginal offenders were excluded from analyses. Because offenders who undergo compressed assessments are – generally – lower risk and need than their counterparts for whom a full assessment is completed, it may be that the level of need represented in the analyses reported here is somewhat deflated. This would be the case for all offenders, but given the difference in distribution of compressed assessments, especially so for ethnocultural offenders.

Data and Analytic Approach

Data were obtained from CSC's Offender Management System, a computerized system that records all information on offenders' under CSC's jurisdiction from admission to the end of the sentence. In addition to data on ethnicity, basic demographic and sentence information, and criminal history, each offender's completed Dynamic Factor Identification and Assessment – Revised (DFIA-R) was obtained. This instrument, which comprises a portion of each offender's intake assessment, guides parole officers in their examination of offenders' criminogenic need in seven areas: community functioning, education and employment, attitudes, associates, substance use, marital and family, and personal/emotional (CSC, 2014a). Each of these seven domains include a number of dichotomous indicators that are scored as present or absent by parole officers based on file information and an interview with the offender. These indicators were used as measures of certain social history variables. In addition, for each domain, the parole officers assign one of the following overall ratings: *asset to community adjustment*, *no need*, *low need*, *moderate need*, or *considerable need*. For the purposes of the current study, these overall ratings were dichotomized, with need levels indicative of a probable need for intervention (*moderate or considerable need*), considered separately from the lesser need ratings.

Demographic, criminal history, and DFIA-R data were examined for each offender group

– both White, Aboriginal, and ethnocultural, and also subgroups of ethnocultural offenders – to determine whether the groups differed in any areas. For each examination, percentages were calculated from all data (i.e., missing data were not excluded as is often the case) given that patterns relating to missing data may also be informative, possibly reflective of differing challenges by group in obtaining historical data (for instance, prior to immigration). In the tabular presentation of information, the percentages of offenders with indicators endorsed and not endorsed are presented; the residual (i.e., the value obtained when subtracting these values from 100 percent) represents the percentage of offenders for whom information was missing.

Finally, given that the data analysed reflected the full population of offenders admitted in the fiscal year with relevant data, inferential statistics were not appropriate. Instead, results were interpreted in terms of practical significance.

Results

Criminal History

In comparison to White and Aboriginal offenders, ethnocultural offenders were less likely to have adult criminal histories (80% and 86% vs. 65%), including both provincial and federal terms. Not surprisingly, then, they were also less likely to have been convicted of a sex offence or to have a previous community supervision failure. With respect to youth criminal history, rates for ethnocultural offenders were similar to those for White offenders, with both groups less likely to have youth offences than Aboriginal offenders (36% and 38%, respectively, vs. 57%). Among ethnocultural offenders, East and South East Asian tended to have less extensive criminal histories than did others (see Table A.1 in Appendix).

Importantly, in the criminal history domain as well as in virtually all other domains examined, there was often as much or more variability *among* ethnocultural offenders (that is, in comparing ethnocultural subgroups) as there was *between* ethnocultural offenders and their White or Aboriginal counterparts. This pattern underscores the importance of remembering the diversity within this group and avoiding assumptions of homogeneity – both within the broad category of ethnocultural offenders and within the individual subgroups.

Associates Domain

Overall, ethnocultural offenders (72%) were slightly more likely than White offenders (63%) and approximately equally likely as Aboriginal offenders (69%) to present some/high needs in the associates domain (see Table 2). Asian offenders, especially East or South East Asian offenders, were the least likely to present such need. Ethnocultural offenders were generally similar to White offenders – and sometimes to Aboriginal offenders – across the indicators examined. That said, ethnocultural offenders were much less likely than both White and Aboriginal offenders to associate with substance abusers, and more likely to receive prosocial support from family, friends, and intimate partners (see Table A.2 in Appendix).

Conversely, ethnocultural offenders' rates of suspected gang affiliation were similar to those of Aboriginal offenders (20% and 18%, respectively) and over twice that of White offenders (10%). There was also considerable variation in the proportion of offenders within ethnocultural groups that resided in high crime areas, ranging from 12% for East or South East

Asian offenders to 42% for Black offenders.

Table 2

Overall Dynamic Factor Identification and Analysis - Revised Domain Ratings, by Ethnicity

Group	Offenders with “Some” or “High” Needs in Domain (%)						
	Associates	Attitudes	Community Functioning	Education/ Employment	Family/ Marital	Personal/ Emotional	Substance Abuse
Ethnocultural	72	80	25	59	25	68	33
Aboriginal	69	76	36	76	51	87	83
White	63	77	25	53	36	77	64
Ethnocultural Offenders							
Arab / West Asian	79	87	15	59	25	61	42
Black	75	84	25	60	24	69	28
East / South East Asian	60	66	21	49	18	61	28
Hispanic / Latin	66	74	35	57	31	79	52
South Asian	63	76	18	63	31	65	61
Other	82	83	39	65	30	76	47

Attitudes Domain

Overall, the proportion of ethnocultural offenders identified as presenting some/high needs in the attitudes domain was similar across ethnicity (see Table 2). Again, East or South East Asian offenders were the least likely to be assessed as presenting need in this domain. In comparison to White offenders, ethnocultural offenders were slightly less likely to value a substance abusing lifestyle or to disrespect personal, commercial, or public property (see Table A.3 of the Appendix). On the other hand, they were slightly more likely than White offenders to be assessed as having attitudes supportive of instrumental or goal-oriented violence. Within this domain, however, there was considerable variability among ethnocultural groups, with East and South East Asians least frequently having this indicator endorsed and Black and “other” ethnocultural offenders most frequently having it endorsed.

Community Functioning Domain

While the same proportion of ethnocultural and White offenders (25%) present as having some/high community functioning need, a higher proportion of Aboriginal offenders (36%) fall into this category (see Table 3). Among ethnocultural offenders, Arab and West Asian offenders had the least need in this area. Ethnocultural offenders were less likely than their White or Aboriginal counterparts to report unstable accommodation, financial instability, having used social assistance, having limited constructive leisure activities, or having limited attachment to the community at admission (see Table A.4 in Appendix). Generally, the pattern that emerged indicates that Aboriginal offenders were most likely to endorse these indicators, followed by White offenders and then by ethnocultural offenders. Among ethnocultural offenders, Asian offenders – especially Arab / West Asian and South Asian – had the lowest rates of endorsement of almost all indicators.

Education / Employment Domain

In comparison to Aboriginal offenders (76%), fewer ethnocultural (59%) and White (53%) offenders present as having some/high need in the education/employment domain (see Table 2). Again, East or South East Asian offenders were those with the lowest rates of need. Ethnocultural offenders were about as likely as White offenders – and more likely than Aboriginal offenders – to have completed grade 10 and high school (see Table A.5 in Appendix). That said, ethnocultural offenders' files were more frequently missing information in this area, perhaps due to having spent their academic years elsewhere than Canada. With respect to the other indicators in this domain, ethnocultural and White offenders were similar. As compared to Aboriginal offenders, however, they were much more likely to have been employed at the time of arrest and to have marketable job skills. Among ethnocultural offenders, Asian offenders tended to have the highest rates of employment prior to arrest and of marketable job skills. Asian offenders – and particularly East and South East Asian offenders – were also the most likely to be assessed as having good work ethic.

Family / Marital Domain

In comparison to Aboriginal (51%) and White (36%) offenders, fewer ethnocultural offenders (25%) presented as having some/high need in the family/marital domain (see Table 2). This was especially the case for East and South East Asian offenders. This finding was

consistent across a variety of indicators, with fewer ethnocultural offenders having limited attachment to the family or negative relations with parental figures during childhood and having problematic intimate relationships as an adult (see Table A.6 in Appendix). In particular, ethnocultural offenders were less likely to have been abused as a child than White and Aboriginal offenders (17% vs. 33% and 58%, respectively) or to have witnessed family violence during childhood (16% vs. 28% and 57%, respectively). They were also less likely to both have been victimized, and have perpetrated domestic violence. Among ethnocultural offenders, East, South East, and South Asian offenders were the least likely to report abuse and violence in these areas.

Personal / Emotional Domain

Compared to Aboriginal offenders (87%), a smaller proportion of ethnocultural (68%) and White (77%) offenders present as having some/high need in the personal/emotional domain (see Table 2). Among ethnocultural offenders, Arab, and East, South East, and West Asian offenders were least likely to present such need. Across indicators, ethnocultural offenders were either as or less likely than White offenders to have each indicator endorsed. For instance, similar proportions of ethnocultural and White offenders were identified as displaying narrow and rigid thinking, having limited ability to link actions to consequences, having limited time management and problem recognition skills, and as feeling and expressing anger and aggression, while Aboriginal offenders were more likely to display these indicators (see Appendix table A.7). Ethnocultural offenders were less likely than White offenders to be rated as impulsive, as having difficulty coping with stress and solving interpersonal problems, as having a limited ability to generate choices, or as giving up easily when challenged. Again, generally speaking, Asian offenders, and especially East and South East Asian offenders, were the least likely to have these indicators endorsed.

Substance Abuse Domain

The largest difference was observed within this domain. Compared to Aboriginal (83%) and White offenders (64%), the proportion of ethnocultural offenders presenting as having some/high substance abuse needs was much lower (33%; see Table 2). This pattern was true across indicators reflecting early onset of use of various substances, various problematic substance use behaviours (e.g., binge drinking, combining drugs and alcohol), and negative

impacts of substance use (e.g., on employment, on personal relationships, resulting in law violations; see Table A.8 in Appendix). Among ethnocultural offenders, the lowest rates were again among East and South East Asian offenders.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the way in which ethnocultural offenders' life experiences and pre-incarceration backgrounds differ from those of White and Aboriginal offenders, as well as the differences among subgroups of ethnocultural offenders. These areas were examined as indicators of social history, given data availability. This study is one of only a small number, thus far, that have focused on Canadian federally-sentenced ethnocultural offenders (e.g., Gottschall, 2012; Nolan & Power, 2013; Ritchie et al., submitted; Trevethan & Rastin, 2004; Wilton & Power, 2014; Zakaria, 2011), and therefore contributes significantly to our understanding of this population.

Contributing to the Limited Extant Research on Ethnocultural Offenders

In interpreting the numerous informative patterns that emerged in this study, an important caution is necessary. Perlin and McClain (2009) argued that it is important not to assume that individuals are defined by their cultural background. In other words, simply because certain differences emerged between groups in this study, it would not be appropriate to assume that the underlying findings apply to all individuals in each ethnocultural group. Instead, it is important to consider each offender's life experience and pre-incarceration background individually.

That being said, previous research has identified that ethnocultural offenders, as a whole, tend to be assessed as presenting lower levels of risk than White and Aboriginal offenders (Ritchie et al., submitted). The current research also identified that ethnocultural offenders have less extensive prior criminal histories and much lower rates of problematic substance use, both of which are among the strongest correlates of offending behaviour (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). Despite more similar levels of need in other areas, these findings suggest that ethnocultural offenders may have less entrenched criminality than White and Aboriginal offenders. Indeed, research conducted over a decade ago reached the same conclusion (Trevethan & Rastin, 2004); both this previous study and the current one found that Asian offenders, and particularly East and South East Asian offenders, seemed to have the least well-established criminal lifestyles.

This study also suggests that the areas where ethnocultural offenders might benefit most from intervention may differ from those most pertinent for White and Aboriginal offenders. For instance, the rate of suspected gang affiliation among ethnocultural offenders was about twice

that of White offenders in both the current study and Gottschall's (2012) previous examination. On the other hand, rates of problematic substance were much lower among ethnocultural offenders than among White and Aboriginal offenders, which may be partially explained by the higher rates of ethnocultural Canadians' affiliation with religions associated with limited or no alcohol consumption (e.g, the Muslim faith; Statistics Canada, 2011). Though consideration of individual differences are again very important, these results suggest that, taken as a group, ethnocultural offenders' most prominent need areas may differ from those of their White and Aboriginal counterparts. This knowledge may further inform the delivery of interventions and services reflective of ethnocultural offenders' unique needs (CSC, 2013b).

Cultural Competence

As previously mentioned, the importance of cultural competence skills has increasingly come to be recognized in the criminal justice system (e.g., Perlin & McClain, 2009; Primm et al., 2005). Indeed, this study's findings illustrate the important role of both knowledge and context in exercising cultural competence. Results specific to previous criminal history can demonstrate this point, in that, while it is important to note that ethnocultural offenders tend to have lower rates of previous criminal involvement than other offenders, considering the reasons for this difference is facilitated with further knowledge. For example, a possible partial explanation for this pattern is the inclusion of first- or second-generation immigrants among the ethnocultural offenders. A considerable body of research has demonstrated that many first-generation immigrants choose to move for economic reasons, are motivated to work hard and make successful lives for themselves and their families in their new countries, and are less likely to be involved in crime (e.g., Martinez & Mehlman-Orozco, 2014; Tonry, 2014). In fact, one study has found that an increase in immigration from Mexico to the U.S. can be directly linked to a reduction in rates of crime in the impacted areas of the U.S. over the same time period (Sampson, 2008). It is argued that acculturation, which typically occurs gradually over several generations, coincides with an increase in rates of involvement in crime until rates reach those of the predominant population in the new location (e.g., Rumbaut, 2004).

Understanding this possible contributor could inform a discussion with an offender, or inform intervention delivery. Similarly, knowledge of values that may differ culturally (e.g., individualism vs. collectivism, explicit vs. implicit communication; Kabundi et al., 2008) and how these values might play a role in this hypothetical discussion or influence responses to

interventions is another example of where both knowledge and contextual knowledge can increase staff's cultural competency skills.

Overall, considering the reasons for differences between individuals ensures respectful dialogue and contributes to the development of cross-cultural skills (e.g., Whealin & Ruzek, 2008). CSC values cultural competency and has invested in meeting the needs of ethnocultural offenders. All staff receive training relating to diversity as part of their mandatory training, and cultural competency training is also being developed (CSC, 2014b). Also, both information on how to facilitate cross-cultural communication and a cultural competency self-assessment are available (Kabundi et al, 2008). Policies have been promulgated guiding the provision of services and interventions for ethnocultural offenders (CSC, 2013b), and designated staff in each region oversee the needs of ethnocultural offenders. Finally, each region, as well as National Headquarters, work with Ethnocultural Advisory Committees comprised of representatives of independent agencies active in ethnocultural communities to provide guidance and support in meeting ethnocultural offenders' needs.

Conclusion

The present study was among only a handful to-date to examine ethnocultural federally-sentenced offenders, and was perhaps the first to comprehensively examine previous life experiences and pre-incarceration background. As such, it makes an important contribution to our understanding of this population and to our understanding of the possible role of social history factors in ethnocultural offenders' criminal offending.

Before leaving this discussion, it must be reiterated that the breadth of differences within the group of ethnocultural offenders, as well as within each subgroup considered, is similar to or greater than that across groups. As Kabundi and colleagues (2008) wrote, "each person, by virtue of his 'cultural patterns', has his own way of seeing himself in terms of his delinquent behaviour" (p. 20). Though consideration of social history across groups of offenders is important, offenders' individual, family, community, and inter-generational experiences and backgrounds contribute in unique ways to each individual's life path and behaviour. As such, in addition to simply increasing knowledge, the study may also act as a spring-board in eliciting discussions and information sharing, through a lens of cultural competence, regarding both individual offenders' life experiences and possible reasons for the differences between ethnocultural, White, and Aboriginal offenders.

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Appendix: Offender Characteristics by Ethnicity

Table A.1. *Criminal History across Offender Ethnicity*

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
Adult Criminal History									
Yes	70	70	49	55	61	65	65	86	80
No	30	30	51	45	39	35	35	14	20
Youth Criminal History									
Yes	35	44	17	28	16	48	36	57	38
No	65	56	83	72	84	52	64	43	62
Adult Provincial Terms									
Yes	55	57	33	41	37	55	51	74	66
No	45	40	61	57	63	44	47	26	33
Adult Federal Terms									
Yes	17	19	15	16	8	17	17	32	29
No	83	78	79	83	92	82	80	68	70
Failure during community-based supervision (adult)									
Yes	52	47	24	35	35	50	42	68	59
No	48	50	70	64	63	49	54	31	39
No crime free period of one year or more (Adult)									
Yes	13	13	7	5	14	11	12	22	15
No	87	83	86	93	86	86	85	77	84
Sex offence history (current or past)									
Yes	4	12	6	19	12	11	11	25	20
No	96	85	88	79	88	88	87	74	79

Table A.2. *Associates Domain across Offender Ethnicity*

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
Associates with substance abusers									
Yes	68	67	50	66	47	64	63	89	71
No	28	26	43	33	53	30	32	10	27
Has many criminal acquaintances									
Yes	82	76	59	62	63	89	73	75	66
No	16	17	35	35	35	8	21	21	31
Has many criminal friends									
Yes	63	54	33	43	43	67	51	58	47
No	31	34	58	52	49	27	39	38	48
Has contact with criminal family members									
Yes	16	18	7	24	10	20	16	37	18
No	82	75	84	74	90	74	78	59	80
Has criminal partner									
Yes	13	11	11	10	10	12	11	16	14
No	82	80	83	88	88	80	82	81	83
Suspected affiliation with street gang/organized crime									
Yes	21	21	16	22	18	17	20	18	10
No	75	72	78	74	78	71	74	80	88
Resides in high crime area									
Yes	21	42	12	24	16	41	32	45	18
No	72	47	79	64	84	50	58	49	71
Prosocial support from intimate partner is limited									
Yes	41	37	40	47	41	47	40	61	54
No	54	53	52	52	59	46	53	35	42
Prosocial family support is limited									
Yes	16	17	14	36	23	20	18	45	30
No	80	77	79	60	78	77	76	52	67
Prosocial support from friends is limited									
Yes	56	62	38	62	45	62	56	78	66
No	35	27	50	31	50	32	34	17	30
Has previously been referred to programs addressing deficit(s)									
Yes	3	10	6	5	6	14	9	14	11
No	96	85	89	93	94	85	88	84	88

Table A.3. *Attitudes Domain across Offender Ethnicity*

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
Displays negative attitudes towards the criminal justice system									
Yes	66	66	42	41	51	55	59	61	53
No	32	30	53	57	49	42	38	38	46
Displays negative attitudes towards the correctional system									
Yes	34	35	16	21	20	27	29	34	27
No	63	60	78	76	80	71	67	64	71
Takes pride in criminal exploits									
Yes	18	18	10	12	14	23	17	14	12
No	79	71	84	85	86	68	75	83	84
Displays non-conforming attitudes toward society									
Yes	72	73	51	67	69	85	70	68	68
No	27	23	44	29	29	14	27	31	31
Values a substance abusing lifestyle									
Yes	41	31	24	54	29	47	34	68	53
No	58	62	72	43	69	47	61	30	45
Disrespects personal belongings									
Yes	31	35	19	26	20	56	33	48	44
No	66	59	75	72	80	41	63	50	55
Disrespects public or commercial property									
Yes	34	22	16	17	18	47	24	38	35
No	65	72	80	81	82	50	72	60	63
Attitudes support instrumental/goal-oriented violence									
Yes	47	59	24	41	33	53	49	51	40
No	51	36	70	57	67	44	47	47	58
Attitudes support expressive/emotional violence									
Yes	42	38	19	47	29	46	37	53	35
No	55	54	74	48	71	52	57	45	62
Denies crime or uses excuses to justify or minimize crime									
Yes	61	65	43	60	71	52	60	62	60
No	37	31	52	38	29	47	36	37	38
Has previously been referred to programs addressing deficit(s)									
Yes	9	18	12	12	12	21	16	26	18

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
No	89	77	84	86	88	76	81	72	80

Table A.4. *Community Functioning Domain across Offender Ethnicity*

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
Unstable accommodation									
Yes	17	23	17	33	10	36	23	44	33
No	82	72	79	66	90	59	73	55	65
Financial instability									
Yes	56	57	46	62	37	67	55	68	59
No	41	37	49	36	63	32	41	30	39
Has used social assistance									
Yes	31	44	20	45	25	46	38	69	54
No	65	48	68	52	69	46	54	27	41
Constructive leisure activities are limited									
Yes	34	42	37	45	37	53	41	59	49
No	62	50	58	54	63	38	52	38	47
Community attachment is limited									
Yes	21	32	35	36	37	46	33	51	41
No	78	62	61	62	63	49	62	47	56
Use of community resources is limited									
Yes	21	32	32	33	31	42	32	45	34
No	78	60	62	64	69	53	62	52	61
Has previously been referred to programs addressing deficit(s)									
Yes	3	5	4	5	4	6	5	13	9
No	94	90	92	93	96	91	91	85	29

Table A.5. *Education/Employment Domain across Offender Ethnicity*

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
Has less than grade 10 or equivalent									
Yes	31	33	26	40	35	46	34	59	46
No	52	50	63	50	51	41	51	39	50
Has less than high school diploma or equivalent									
Yes	59	64	50	64	63	67	61	78	66
No	30	26	38	33	29	23	28	20	31
Employment history is absent									
Yes	10	18	9	16	14	17	16	24	14
No	89	77	86	79	86	80	81	75	85
Unemployed at the time of arrest									
Yes	48	57	46	43	49	58	53	71	59
No	51	38	49	52	49	39	43	27	40
Job history has been unstable									
Yes	61	66	47	59	55	62	61	78	61
No	35	28	49	36	45	35	34	29	37
Marketable job skills obtained though experience are limited									
Yes	45	53	38	33	53	47	48	62	40
No	54	40	57	57	43	50	47	36	57
Job skills obtained through formal training are limited									
Yes	66	76	59	64	71	71	71	81	69
No	32	16	34	28	27	26	23	17	28
Dissatisfied with job skills									
Yes	30	41	28	33	31	41	37	41	33
No	59	49	65	55	59	47	53	54	60
Co-operative work skills are limited									
Yes	14	15	7	9	14	21	14	23	16
No	59	49	65	55	59	47	53	54	60
Belief in oneself to improve employability is low									
Yes	3	8	8	10	16	14	9	18	12
No	85	82	84	81	78	74	81	77	83
Work ethic can be described as poor									
Yes	16	21	14	19	13	27	20	36	20
No	63	59	77	62	71	55	63	54	66

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
<i>table continues.</i>									
Has previously been referred to programs addressing deficit(s)									
Yes	17	23	9	14	12	26	19	26	20
No	80	70	84	79	84	70	75	71	78

Table A.6. *Family/Marital Domain across Offender Ethnicity*

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
Limited attachment to family unit during childhood									
Yes	10	15	7	26	12	21	15	45	26
No	89	81	88	72	88	78	82	54	73
Relations with parental figure were negative during childhood									
Yes	24	22	14	28	10	39	21	61	41
No	75	73	81	66	90	62	74	38	57
Abused during childhood									
Yes	20	17	12	21	12	24	17	58	33
No	78	77	83	78	88	70	80	40	64
Witnessed family violence during childhood									
Yes	18	15	10	19	4	27	16	57	28
No	78	78	84	76	96	71	82	40	77
Inability to maintain an enduring intimate relationship									
Yes	20	16	7	24	23	21	17	36	25
No	78	76	84	72	76	74	77	63	72
Intimate relationship(s) have been problematic									
Yes	38	34	26	52	39	50	36	64	50
No	59	59	67	47	57	49	58	34	47
Victimized by spousal abuse									
Yes	7	6	5	9	0	17	7	26	13
No	92	88	89	88	100	80	89	72	84
Perpetrated spousal violence									
Yes	28	25	13	33	31	35	25	38	32
No	69	70	80	64	69	62	70	49	65
Attitudes support spousal violence									
Yes	11	11	6	16	16	17	12	21	15
No	86	80	88	83	84	79	82	75	82
Has no parental responsibilities									
Yes	49	38	38	36	37	44	49	42	42
No	49	58	58	62	63	53	57	57	57
Has significant difficulties handling parenting responsibilities									
Yes	13	16	6	17	10	12	14	24	21
No	79	40	83	72	86	76	75	66	68

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
<i>table continues.</i>									
Parental knowledge and/or skill is limited									
Yes	10	14	9	17	8	18	13	26	17
No	80	72	78	76	86	61	74	64	79
Formally investigated for suspicion of child abuse/neglect									
Yes	1	5	3	7	4	5	4	11	10
No	94	87	90	90	96	89	89	84	85
Uses excessive force to discipline child									
Yes	3	3	7	2	2	0	3	2	3
No	92	88	90	95	96	94	90	90	90
Has previously been referred to programs for addressing deficit(s)									
Yes	0	5	2	10	6	9	5	18	9
No	97	90	93	88	94	97	91	80	90

Table A.7. *Personal/Emotional Domain across Offender Ethnicity*

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
Displays narrow and rigid thinking									
Yes	32	47	26	45	43	49	42	56	43
No	66	49	70	54	57	47	55	43	55
Problem recognition skills are limited									
Yes	56	65	55	66	71	61	63	69	62
No	41	31	40	33	29	35	34	30	37
Ability to generate choices is limited									
Yes	72	62	49	66	53	59	60	78	67
No	25	33	47	33	47	36	36	21	32
Ability to link actions to consequences is limited									
Yes	68	65	54	66	67	61	63	71	63
No	30	33	47	33	47	36	36	21	32
Has difficulty coping with stress									
Yes	47	39	42	55	59	56	45	71	59
No	52	52	51	41	39	38	49	25	38
Gives up easily when challenged									
Yes	20	18	17	29	25	27	20	38	27
No	75	73	75	62	69	59	71	57	66
Impulsive									
Yes	51	61	45	67	43	68	57	80	67
No	48	35	49	31	55	26	28	18	32
Engages in thrill seeking behaviour									
Yes	34	32	24	28	23	50	32	39	33
No	61	61	67	66	78	44	62	57	64
Gambling has been problematic									
Yes	7	3	18	4	8	5	6	6	5
No	89	91	72	91	90	88	88	91	91
Has difficulty setting long-term goals									
Yes	23	35	21	45	29	42	33	49	39
No	76	60	74	54	71	53	63	49	59
Has difficulty setting realistic goals									
Yes	18	28	16	26	33	36	26	41	30
No	80	66	79	71	65	58	69	57	68

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
<i>table continues.</i>									
Assertiveness skills are limited									
Yes	18	18	29	31	27	26	22	33	28
No	78	75	64	66	74	67	72	66	69
Time Management skills are problematic									
Yes	17	24	13	29	16	33	22	35	28
No	78	67	81	67	82	50	69	57	69
Listening skills are limited									
Yes	21	19	15	21	23	18	19	25	25
No	76	77	80	78	76	77	77	72	73
Has difficulty solving interpersonal problems									
Yes	56	50	45	64	43	59	51	73	61
No	42	43	50	33	57	38	44	26	37
Manipulates others to achieve goals									
Yes	47	38	27	43	43	52	38	42	47
No	43	52	66	50	55	39	52	55	50
Empathy skills are limited									
Yes	52	55	29	57	49	50	50	56	53
No	45	37	65	40	51	36	44	42	44
Frequently feels intense anger									
Yes	10	16	6	19	8	23	14	33	19
No	82	76	88	76	88	67	78	63	75
Frequently suppresses anger									
Yes	11	11	12	14	8	17	12	33	20
No	78	77	81	78	86	71	78	61	73
Frequently acts in an aggressive manner									
Yes	32	41	8	31	14	46	33	46	30
No	61	51	86	64	86	52	61	52	68
Has low frustration tolerance									
Yes	32	41	8	31	14	46	33	46	30
No	69	61	80	59	71	50	64	47	59
Frequently interprets neutral situations as hostile									
Yes	18	20	7	26	16	26	19	25	19
No	92	87	90	85	94	96	75	70	76

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
<i>table continues.</i>									
Has deviant sexual preferences									
Yes	3	7	4	12	6	2	6	14	15
No	92	87	90	85	94	96	89	82	82
Displays deviant sexual attitudes									
Yes	1	7	4	16	8	5	7	17	16
No	94	88	92	81	92	93	89	81	81

Table A.8. *Substance Abuse Domain across Offender Ethnicity*

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
Early age alcohol use									
Yes	21	22	19	40	18	36	24	80	50
No	78	69	75	57	80	59	70	19	47
Frequently engages in binge drinking									
Yes	18	12	5	31	12	18	14	57	32
No	79	80	89	60	86	74	80	41	64
Has combined the use of alcohol and drugs									
Yes	30	23	21	41	27	30	26	76	52
No	68	68	73	55	71	56	67	21	43
Alcohol use interferes with employment									
Yes	10	7	6	19	10	8	8	45	21
No	83	85	90	78	88	85	85	51	74
Alcohol use interferes with interpersonal relationships									
Yes	16	13	7	40	18	17	15	63	33
No	82	80	88	57	80	77	79	35	64
Alcohol use interferes with physical or emotional well-being									
Yes	17	12	5	40	18	18	15	57	32
No	80	81	90	57	80	7	79	35	64
Excessive alcohol use is part of the offender's lifestyle									
Yes	20	12	9	36	14	17	15	60	32
No	79	81	84	60	84	76	79	37	65
Early age drug use									
Yes	32	31	21	38	16	35	30	78	53
No	66	61	73	59	82	61	64	20	45
Has gone on drug-taking bouts or binges									
Yes	32	17	24	28	18	33	22	60	50
No	65	75	72	67	80	59	72	36	47
Has combined the use of different drugs									
Yes	24	15	17	33	14	29	19	59	49
No	70	75	74	64	84	61	73	37	46
Drug use interferes with employment									
Yes	21	11	17	26	10	27	16	46	38
No	72	80	79	72	88	67	78	50	58

Offender Characteristic	Percentage of Offenders in Each Group								
	Arab/ West Asian (N = 71)	Black (N = 372)	East/South East Asian (N = 109)	Hispanic/ Latin (N = 58)	South Asian (N = 49)	Other (N = 66)	All Ethnocultural (N = 725)	Aboriginal (N = 945)	White (N = 2,643)
<i>table continues.</i>									
Drug use interferes with interpersonal relationships									
Yes	35	19	19	38	20	38	24	56	47
No	62	74	75	60	78	55	70	42	50
Drug use interferes with physical or emotional well-being									
Yes	27	16	16	40	12	36	21	57	48
No	69	76	79	59	86	56	73	41	49
Regular drug use is part of the offender's lifestyle									
Yes	45	32	26	41	28	46	34	69	54
No	54	61	69	57	69	50	60	30	43
Alcohol or drug use has resulted in law violations									
Yes	42	39	29	52	41	53	40	87	70
No	54	61	69	57	69	50	60	30	43
Becomes violent when drinking or using drugs									
Yes	21	17	9	41	23	33	20	69	39
No	75	70	84	54	78	55	71	27	55
Alcohol and/or drug use is part of the offence cycle									
Yes	37	26	24	54	33	46	31	82	64
No	61	64	72	45	65	47	62	16	34