

Probation Practice with Non-Irish National Offenders in the Republic of Ireland

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Summary: Probation practice with probationers from minority groups, in particular those with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, presents challenges to Probation Officers. This paper examines how Probation Officers view practice skills and methods of probation supervision with non-Irish national offenders from minority ethno-cultural backgrounds. Overcoming language barriers and cultural differences in areas such as engaging with offenders, encouraging compliance and gathering information for use in assessing risk are issues that were raised in focus group discussions with Probation Officers. These issues are explored and findings from the focus groups are summarised and discussed.

Keywords: culture, ethnicity, race, minorities, identity, inclusion, exclusion, marginalisation, offending, probation, Ireland.

Ethnicity and crime

Research on links between ethnicity and crime has often been broken down into two different, but not necessarily discrete perspectives. One perspective focuses on a culture conflict between ethnic minorities and a criminal justice system that represents a dominant ethno-cultural majority. The second perspective considers the impact of the racialisation of interactions between minority populations and agents of the criminal justice system (Durrance *et al.*, 2010; Lewis, 2009; Webster, 2012). These two related strands bring with them issues of individual and systemic racism and discriminatory treatment at various decision points in the criminal justice system. (These include decisions to arrest and/or

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prosecute, potential bias in findings of guilt or innocence, disparities in sentencing and difficulties in working with minority ethnic offenders in terms of compliance and engagement.) Such strands can be further complicated by suggestions that ‘criminal justice-based discrimination is symptomatic of structural racial inequality’ and/or that ‘historical legacies of racial injustice’ are part of the ‘collective memory’ of indigenous and immigrant minorities resulting from slavery and colonialism (Webster, 2012, p. 111). Ireland has neither a history of slavery (at least not a recent history) nor of being a colonial power. There is insufficient Irish research to suggest that either of these are at work in Ireland or indeed relevant to the Irish context, with the possible exception of the emerging literature on the criminal justice system and Travellers (Mulcahy, 2012).

Ethnic minorities in Ireland

There is an extensive and more general literature on the issue of ethnic minorities in Ireland , particularly within the context of Celtic Tiger and post-Celtic Tiger immigration, including both economic migrants and asylum seekers (Mac Éinrí and White, 2008; Fanning, 2012; Loyal, 2011; Gilmartin *et al.*, 2013). This includes literature that addresses the issues of racism and also examines discriminatory practices against minorities although very little of it looks at issues directly related to criminal justice. The Roma has been the one group of non-Irish Nationals that has received some criminal justice attention, but it has been limited (Horgan, 2007).

One possible reason for this lack of research focus may simply be one of quantity. Non-Irish nationals have not been recorded by the criminal justice system in large numbers, if they were recorded at all. For example, a 2009 study undertaken by the Probation Service indicated that only 3.26 per cent of the Probation Service caseload was made up of what were termed foreign nationals (Probation Service, 2009). Just over half of those were from Eastern European countries that became part of the EU between 2004 (Poland, Latvia and Lithuania) and 2007 (Romania). A follow-up study in 2011 showed an increase to 4.8 per cent of probationers who were foreign nationals and four of the top five countries in terms of numbers on probation were from Poland, Lithuania, Romania and Latvia (Burke and Gormley, 2012).²

² In both studies, people from the UK were excluded from the sample. The data is discussed more fully in Fernée and Burke, 2010..

The percentages were slightly higher for committals to prison. The number of EU prisoners (including from the UK) has remained relatively constant between 12 per cent and 13 per cent in the five-year period between 2008 and 2013, the last year when this data was available (Irish Prison Service, 2014). EU nationality is not disaggregated (except for UK nationals) so it is not possible to tell which EU countries had greater representation. The number of non-EU prisoners declined during that time from 16 per cent in 2008 to 5.6 per cent in 2013 with the largest drop being African nationals.³ This might suggest that encounters with non-Irish nationals on probation would not be a frequent occurrence, although the interview data given below suggests a more nuanced picture.

Working with ethnic minority offenders

Working with ethnic minority offenders has been the subject of some research and practice examination, particularly in a community justice/probation context (Durrance *et al.*, 2010). An extensive review of research in the UK on probation practice with ethnic minorities in Britain (Lewis, 2009) found that it was unclear what type of offending behaviour programmes might work best with which ethnic minority offenders, but 'that traditional casework skills and time are needed for OASys [the standard risk assessment instrument in England and Wales] to be completed well' (p. 117).

A survey of probation managers, practitioners and academics across Europe to consider the development of a broad European approach to probation training found that the 'Ability to work with diversity' defined as offenders of 'different race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, level of income, etc.') was considered one of several essential skills or competencies for probation work (Durnescu and Stout, 2011, p. 400).

Montgomery looked at probation work in the UK with asylum seekers as offenders, highlighting specific needs and issues in respect of the offenders' legal status in the UK (Montgomery, 2004). The skills Probation Officers need are not significantly different from those needed in work with other ethnic minority offenders. She suggested, 'It is essential that they [Probation Officers] are aware of the range of language needs and cultural/religious support which such offenders may require' (p. 176).

³ Africans, North, Central and South Americans, as well as Asian inmates are categorised by region, not country.

The social work profession and social work education have paid specific attention to cultural diversity as part of preparation for practice as well as its being recognised in the social workers' code of ethics (Moran, 1998; Social Workers Registration Board, 2010; Kohli *et al.*, 2010). 'Culturally competent social work practice' has become a common phrase to indicate the importance of recognising that social workers frequently work with persons of different cultural backgrounds than their own (Marsiglia and Kulis, 2009; Fong, 2004; Lacroix, 2003).

Much of the European and also Irish social work research in this area has focused on work with ethnic minority children (Christie, 2010; Fanning, 2004). In a comparative study (Williams and Soydan, 2005) across several European countries, there were three levels of response by social workers asked to consider a hypothetical case involving possible neglect of a child by his immigrant family. The responses from the study reflected

cultural sensitivity orientations where the worker is concerned to respond to the family with culturally appropriate services and skills, those that reflect *cultural relativity* considerations where the worker reflects on cultural difference and its implications, and those that reflect *professional competence* considerations where the worker reflects on their own level of knowledge and ability to respond to the case in question. (p. 916 emphasis original)

The continuing connections between probation in Ireland and social work qualifications (Carr *et al.*, 2010) along with the interest in continuing diversity training among Irish Probation Officers (Fernée and Burke, 2010) could indicate that cultural competency has some currency with Irish Probation Officers. That said, probation practice takes place within the parameters of compliance with the sentence of the court, an emphasis on public protection, and the need to consider areas where a clash of cultural expectations brings in the force of the law. Working with the involuntary and resistant client is part of what probation practice is all about, regardless of ethnic background of either the Probation Officer or the offender . Probation Officers can find themselves trying to explain, sometimes through an interpreter, to a resistant probationer from an ethnic minority, why compliance as well as challenging offending behaviour is integral to probation supervision. Assumptions about the role of probation and/or criminal justice sanctions may not be shared, there

may be implicit concerns about discrimination, and there may be cultural differences with respect to remorse (Hudson and Bramhall, 2010).

Research study

The research on which this article is based was conducted in the spring and summer of 2013 with Probation Officers of the Irish Probation Service.⁴ Focus groups with Probation Officers were held in major urban centres: Galway, Limerick, Cork, Waterford and Dublin. Probation staff in these locations were contacted directly and asked if they would be willing to be a part of one of the focus groups. Participation was strictly voluntary. The study considered issues of probation practice with ethnic minority offenders, and included both non-Irish nationals and Travellers. The data on Travellers has been reported elsewhere.⁵

A total of thirty-seven Probation Officers participated in the groups. Questions to guide the discussions covered a range of topics related to probation practice. A number of themes emerged from the focus group discussions. These themes related to probation practice issues such as engagement, compliance and risk assessment. It was evident in the discussions that cultural and linguistic differences played a significant part in working with non-Irish nationals on probation. It was also clear that the experiences of Probation Officers with non-Irish nationals could be broadly categorised between two groups: Roma/Gypsy probationers, and other non-Irish nationals. These are discussed in greater depth below, with examples from the data.

Although the data on non-Irish nationals on probation reported above suggest small numbers on caseloads (Probation Service, 2009; Burke and Gormley, 2012), most participants in the focus groups had some experience with non-Irish nationals. Those with longer experience in the Probation Service were able to comment on the increase over the past twenty years or more, of non-Irish nationals on probation. This, however, is not to suggest that the increase was characterised as 'dramatic'; rather that it went from virtually none to some. One participant had extensive experience prior to joining the Service in social services in an economically deprived area of Dublin, and another spoke of experiences in County Limerick:

⁴ The Research Ethics Board of the University of Manitoba approved the research methodology.

⁵ D.C. Bracken (2014) 'Probation Practice with Travellers in the Republic of Ireland', *Irish Probation Journal*, Vol. 11, pp. 44–62.

Researcher: You said it was pre-Celtic tiger so were there many non-nationals at that point?

Participant: No, none I would say. It was back in the 1980's early 90's.

Participant: ... I suppose back in the late nineties there was very few non-Irish nationals in County Limerick, again when I was leaving [a social services position], the number of asylum seekers in Ireland which would have been a trickle up until then, they were starting to increase, but on the ground working with non-Irish nationals [there] was very little.

For other participants who had worked in social services prior to joining the Probation Service, there was a diversity of experiences. Some had never encountered non-Irish nationals in their work, while others had experiences, but few had what might be termed extensive experiences. All participants, those with prior social service experience and those without, had at least some contact with non-Irish nationals as part of their probation work. The following is an example of how this was expressed by one worker, possibly with slightly more experience than average:

working in the Probation Service I've had experience working with both Travellers and non Irish nationals, I think particularly in [an Irish city] because there's a big immigrant community here ... And at one stage when I was doing community service [and] most of my caseload would have been either Travellers or non-Irish nationals.

The focus groups included significant discussion about how much emphasis should be placed on an offender's ethnic background in court reports. Much of the discussion focussed on including the possibility of highlighting cultural differences that may have an impact on the sentence a court decides to impose and the capacity for compliance and engagement with the requirements of a community sentence. There may be a possibility of showing a particular strength that the individual had, the availability of community support, or alternatively the need to provide context and background to the offence. In that way perhaps it was no different than what might be included in a PSR⁶ for an Irish person.

The difference in the view of the research participants was the extent to which cultural/ethnic differences were to be emphasised. It was clear

⁶A PSR is a pre-sanction assessment report prepared for the court by a Probation Officer at the request of the judge prior to sentencing.

from the discussion that the subjects had given this much thought. There were many comments that suggested an engagement with ‘reflexive practice’, the process by which practitioners become ‘aware of the limits of our knowledge, of how our own behaviour plays into organisational practices and why such practices might marginalize groups or exclude individuals’ (Bolton 2010, p. 14). The comments below represent the range of responses to questions about identification of a client’s ethnicity in court reports:

it can be useful particularly when you’re looking from an offender’s perspective of the offence in terms of how we might in their view justify or explain the decision making process ... and if they’re looking at the cultural background the rules which they’ve grown up with or the family [they] grew up with, they can explain the decision making process in their behaviour and I think that can be relevant in a number of situations. There is an expectation that we can contextualize the offence in context of the individual and the situation of that individual, so ethnic background and stuff like that is a very obvious part of it.

I suppose we’re mindful of being prejudicial sometimes as well and whereas certainly in understanding and working with these cases it’s coming up as a challenge you know how would we deal with families where we go in to meet the parents and the mother isn’t present because the family system there where the mother isn’t allowed to be part of the discourse ...

I would say it’s mentioned [ethnicity and culture], it’s mentioned in the pre-sanction reports and it’s usually around family circumstances for both but certainly with the children I’m working with they are Romanian young men and I will always say if they’re part, they’re Romanian and if then they’re part of the Roma, to differentiate, and then also how long they’ve been here ... And then with the young girls I would always mention around their socialisation because they don’t do a lot of it outside the family.

And it might have to do with our judgment values too like if you see someone coming in what do you think when you see this person in, you have to be honest about that, be aware of it and box it and deal with them then, because if we do come in with that well we like it or we don’t.

The research participants’ concern about the appropriate way to reflect cultural difference without playing into stereotypical narratives about

either specific ethnic groups, or more generally about the difference between a criminalised ‘them’ and a majority population of ‘us’ is well founded. Hudson and Bramhall’s research on risk and pre-sentence reports on Asian offenders in Britain noted differences in the way certain aspects of the offenders’ culture, such as strength of family ties and cultural attitudes towards expressions of remorse over the offence, were identified and recorded in PSR’s when compared to white, majority offenders (Hudson and Bramhall, 2010).

As the present study was not intended to review PSRs and focused instead on subjects’ perceptions, the explicit use and impact on sentencing was not at issue. However, the comments suggest it was a topic that the research subjects had given some consideration to.

Risk assessment

Good risk assessment is dependent on the quality of the information obtained and used in standardised instruments. The risk factors used to identify criminogenic need ought to be relevant to the lived experience of the offender, and that experience should be in some way connected to the offending behaviour of the offender. Culture, language, gender and ethnicity are all tied to how the risk factors are interpreted both by the person completing the assessment and the person answering the questions, answers to which lead to the completion of the assessment, development of a risk score, and subsequent case management plan.

Research has identified both gender and ethnicity as possible sources of difficulty in developing a risk assessment that has some validity in terms of contributing to offender management (Marutto and Hannah-Moffat, 2007). The research by Hudson and Bramhall referred to above also identified the strong possibility of bias in terms of how information was both solicited and interpreted when developing an assessment of risk of reoffending. In what they termed the ‘alchemy of race and risk’ (p. 735) ethnic and cultural aspects of, for example, family and minority community activities become associated with crime by individual members of these communities. The danger then is that all offenders from this one background are assumed to share these characteristics.

In the present study, the Probation Officers in the focus groups spoke about the difficulty in applying certain aspects of the risk assessment process to ethnic minorities:

I think there's a general acceptance that the LSIR would discriminate against both the Traveller and ethnic minorities on those areas like accommodation you know the addresses would change very regular, and the education and the employment, in those areas. So I suppose we need to be careful when we're doing those.

We've got what's presented to us at the assessment and how much collateral we can gather around about those who know them, but we don't have their past or you know there's a whole piece there at the beginning of the LSIR that's based on previous convictions and whether they have breached parole or whether they have been cautioned or whatever they've been into before, and we don't have access to all of that, so that piece will skew it straight away.

So that would be the criticism I suppose of the LSIR is that it doesn't take into account cultural risk, cultural issues, and in general people don't override much, cause there's just research to say that that's not ideal to be overwriting the system you're using all the time, there's different view points on that.

I suppose the point is like you need to be culturally aware and observant when you're doing that [gathering information for a risk assessment] like you need to be on your game when you're doing that.

The general views expressed here are not so much a criticism of the risk assessment instrument per se, but rather that the quality of the information may be suspect because it is difficult to verify. Most actuarially based risk assessment instruments consider past criminal history to be an important static factor (as opposed to a dynamic factor and therefore changeable) predicting likelihood of reoffending (Bonta and Andrews, 2007). The participants in the study quoted above clearly saw the lack of credible information on prior offending as problematic in developing a reliable risk assessment score. As well, at least one person also saw the item on the risk instrument related to accommodation as perhaps not relevant with both non-Irish national offenders as well as members of the Travelling community.

Offender supervision

An emphasis on getting good information for a risk assessment is only part of the dynamic in offender supervision. Literature reviews of

effective practice have identified skills long established in social work practice that contribute to a good supervisory relationship as a foundation to promoting change (McNeill *et al.*, 2005; Dowden and Andrews, 2004). Establishing a good working relationship, when there are clear differences of power and authority related to the involuntary nature of the relationship, can be highly problematic particularly with marginalized groups such as ethnic minorities (Rooney, 2009).

The discussions in the focus groups on engagement and compliance tended to centre, understandably perhaps, on issues of communication, language barriers, the use of translators and other obstacles to moving into engagement on offending behaviour. Discussion of language and translators will be considered below. There were, however, some comments related more directly to engagement and also to compliance. The first two comments are specifically about Roma offenders. It is clear that each of the Probation Officers found significant cultural issues with respect to acknowledging that what was done was wrong and that change was necessary. The second two are based on experience more generally with Eastern Europeans, and both their lack of understanding of what probation is about and the difficulty Probation Officers have engaging with offenders from different cultures:

It's kind of harder to work with the Roma, you know, with an Irish young offender there's like a process that you can go through and bring them to a place to where they realize what they did was wrong, but with the Roma it's kind of like, why did you take that, well it was there you know.

It's kind of like in terms of they don't have any notion of changing the offending behaviour, it's part of life. It's very hard to work with that when there's no intention to change, no desire. Like it's kind of like there's this guy robbing a mobile goes into a shop, looks at the mobile phone decides he want it and there was no moving him on from that, he wanted it ...

I think culturally there is a piece there especially with the Eastern Europeans that might come in that in their countries the rules would be a lot stricter so they are quite fearful already of what would happen if they don't comply. So certainly I think already their attitudes to probation and authority are quite different.

... In fact where I worked with foreigners I find they tend to be more compliant than the general public, so you can get into work unless it's the

language barrier. I think if there's a language barrier it's very difficult to get into the real work. I think also there does need to be acknowledged in the therapeutic relationship the cultural differences as well because I don't think we can have a complete understanding of the cultural difference so I think that needs to be acknowledged and explored even before you can get into it with the foreign nationals.

The final comment above indicates both the problem of language as an obstacle to more 'therapeutic' work, and also identifies unspecified 'cultural differences' that require preparation on the part of the worker prior to attempting engagement to promote change in offending behaviour.

Nearly all research participants identified language problems with non-Irish national offenders as an issue. When the discussion in the focus groups moved to issues of language barriers, the conversation shifted frequently to problems with translators, and the difficulty of trying first to get information and then to moving into some kind of engagement with the offender on both compliance and challenging offending behaviour:

... sometimes we had issues with translators who weren't aware ... of the nature of the offending that we would be asking questions about. If it's a sex offender ... they weren't prepared for that and sometimes we've had translators who had to leave the room, they weren't aware that that's the kind of things that they'd be translating...you're losing out on the emotional [part] and a lot of the non verbal cues that we were missing by having an interpreter so we tried to address that as best we could ...

I did have an interpreter one time answer a question for me without putting it to the client, because he didn't realise the method, I was pushing him, I didn't feel the person was being honest with me and I was pushing, challenging, and the interpreter started answering my question which really annoyed me.

Well the Roma yeah, like any Roma families I had to deal with again the dad is the hierarchy in the family and if I bring in an interpreter and the interpreter is male he will spend his time talking to the interpreter, and the interpreter isn't the Probation Officer.

Although these comments indicate a clear frustration both with some of the interpreters and also with the difficulty in communicating with clients through an interpreter, it was clear from the discussions that language

was not necessarily a problem in the majority of situations with non-Irish nationals. The responses appeared to suggest that there was no defined standard with respect to the qualifications and use of interpreters, or guidelines with respect to confidentiality.

Cultural aspects of gender difference, in particular with Roma offenders, often played a major role in offender supervision. Different ways of working with female as opposed to male offenders has been the subject of research (Althoff, 2013; Morash, 2010). A potentially complicating factor is the cultural ways in which gender roles are defined and enforced. The discussions in the research focus groups indicated this was an issue both for female offenders, in particular Roma women, and also for the role of the woman in ethnic minority families.

I suppose the other thing that I've had is particularly with female clients is the dominance or the attempted dominance of the male client in that, in my experience is that they come in with the female for the interview and would nearly insist in coming into the [supervision with their] partner or whatever that there seems to be a very dominant male kind of piece that I don't understand really. I suppose it's a cultural thing. But I sometimes find it when we interview our own you know the Irish nationals we wouldn't have that same dynamic as there is with someone of particularly the Romanian females.

[Comparing Traveller women to Roma women] But she'll [Traveller woman] also talk to the professionals, she talk about, and she'll do the care, but in the Roma families the mother will not even talk to you, she won't, she'll sit there, she will not engage with you at all. If you say can I speak to her on her own the father will sit outside the door.

I remember one woman was given community service and she was going to have to be onsite for several hours a day and that meant that the husband or partner was going to have to mind the children and he asked me in the office could he do the community service for her rather than mind the children ... And I said unfortunately no he would have to mind the children because the alternative is a prison sentence.

And I mean of course we're aware of the fact that they [men] may have a difficulty in working with us [female Probation Officers] as women.

Although the research did not have a specific focus on community service, this issue came up regularly in discussions on probation supervision. As the quote above indicates, culture was an issue with

supervision as it related to community service. The project described by Horgan (2007) arose in several discussions as it related to fashioning a response to offending by a particular group (Roma women) through community service. In a different vein, there were regular comments about how successful community service appeared to be, at least in terms of compliance, for Eastern European men. This comment from one focus group reflected this view: 'what I find in community service is that especially if somebody is from Eastern Europe they show up on time [and] they have a very strong work ethic.'

Strengths

Developing a sense of a minority culture, in particular the strengths that minority group might possess, is important to understanding how that may assist persons to stay out of crime. In particular, a desistance-focussed way of working with minority offenders relies on the strength of the offender's cultural community as well as the offender's connections to that community, to help an individual's movement away from crime (Durrance *et al.*, 2010). The discussion in the focus groups gave an indication that this was an issue that had been the subject of significant thought on the part of the participants. Two specific comments stand out as representative of how seriously this had been considered:

... if you look at the Muslim community in particular you know the impact of the older generation of religious leaders in prison and in the community, sometimes part of the supervision plan is [that] certain individuals would be to help to re-introduce them back to the religious side of their culture ... Bringing people back on board because if they leave the core base of their community the family, the culture sometimes it can be very, very difficult to get back, so going back to the heartland of their culture, it can be [important].

... how do you make them [non-national] feel more comfortable in an environment that's very Irish, very white, do you know what I mean very comfortable, we're very comfortable in this community but are they? So I suppose really it's about rethinking what we're doing ... and I think that could be a key, certainly it's a help to look at strengths, because I think strengths, we do tend to think negatively, because most of the people that we're dealing with have a strength, and we do tend to latch on to them [negatives].

Conclusion

While the research presented here was based on a relatively small sample of Probation Officers the issues discussed have relevance in a wider context. Addressing them would benefit engagement and effectiveness in probation work with people from minority cultures.

The continuing movement of people within the European Union and continued immigration in Ireland suggests that cultural differences and cultural understanding and appropriate practices will be important issues for the Probation Service. Migration to Ireland has continued despite the economic slowdown that began in 2008. The 2011 census showed an increase of non-Irish nationals of 30 per cent since the 2006 census with Polish migrants making up the largest group.⁷ There continues to be a sizeable proportion (20–25 per cent) of some migrant groups (e.g. Lithuanians, Somalians, Latvians, Poles and Brazilians) who do not speak English. (Central Statistics Office, 2012).

The research indicated that all three of the approaches identified by Williams and Soydan (2005)—cultural sensitivity, cultural relativity and professional competence—were in evidence in the comments from the participants. There was a strong sense in the discussions that Probation Officers were keenly aware of cultural differences, and reflected on both what they knew and did not know about the ethno-cultural backgrounds of their supervisees.

Notwithstanding the issues of translators, the difficulties in gathering information and moving toward engagement with non-Irish national offenders were recognised and solutions considered. These findings reflected those of Ferneé and Burke's (2010) review of diversity issues in the Probation Service. Probation Officers in the present study seemed interested in being able to acquire greater knowledge for use in professional practice. As UK probation researchers found (Durrance *et al.*, 2010) in considering probation work with ethnic minorities:

... there is little sense in attempting to construct theories and develop practice models that focus on 'race' without reference to dimensions such as religion and, to a lesser extent, nationality; nor in broad terms, can we develop meaningful practice models unless they incorporate research on the diversity of experiences among people from minority ethnic groups. (p. 139)

⁷This data includes UK nationals.

Assuming that present immigration trends continue, particularly with rights of free movement for EU citizens, Ireland can be viewed as moving from a mono-cultural to a multi-cultural society. The majority of immigrants to Ireland becoming Irish citizens have come from non-EU countries (Fanning, 2013). Thus, the recognition of cultural differences will likely continue to be a factor in probation supervision, whether of EU nationals or others from outside the EU. Ireland it can be said has been slow in adjusting to this radical change from being historically characterised as a nation of emigrants to one to which many people wish to enter and settle.

Valuable Irish research on the experiences of probationers exists (Healy, 2010), but a weakness of the current research is that it does not address the issues and experiences of non-Irish nationals on probation. There is not a large body of research on the experiences of immigrants in Ireland generally. Studies on the experiences of children (Ní Laoire *et al.*, 2011) of migrants as well as of Polish families in Dublin (Smith, 2013) provide some important initial background and insights.

There is a need for further in-depth study and research on the experiences of non-Irish nationals in Ireland generally. The data from the present research would seem to suggest that in the complex world of criminal justice and in the probation assessment and supervision practice there is a need for greater knowledge, information and understanding on the needs and experience of non-Irish nationals to ensure relevance, effectiveness and appropriate interventions in probation practice for the benefit of the client and whole community.

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