

EXPERIENCES OF ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM IN IRELAND

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I want to start by thanking those Muslim men and women across Ireland that made me feel so welcome and gave so generously of their time, trust and hospitality. I am forever grateful and I hope that my research can in some way help challenge the phenomenon of anti-Muslim racism, otherwise known as Islamophobia in Ireland. I want to stress at the outset that the findings presented in this report do not aim to sensationalise nor claim to represent the experiences of all Muslims in Ireland, but they do present a reality for some.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my Ph.D. supervisor Dr Amanda Haynes in the Department of Sociology, University of Limerick and her fellow co-director of the Hate and Hostility Research Group, Jennifer Schweppe in the School of Law, University of Limerick. This research would not have been possible without the scholarship I received from the Irish Research Council for my doctoral studies.

Dr James Carr, June 2014.

INTRODUCTION

This study engages in original, critical empirical analyses of the lived experiences, recording and reporting of anti-Muslim racism, in Ireland. The results of these analyses identify opportunities for positive change in the official monitoring of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. This study provides an original and otherwise absent evidence base for the presence of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland, presenting as it does, the lived experiences of this phenomenon in the Irish context. Furthermore, this study provides evidence of the manner in which members of Muslim communities report, or not, their experiences of racism, and indeed their perceptions towards doing so to the State. As it currently stands, the Irish State is blind to anti-Muslim racism as it does not systematically collect data on this phenomenon as a distinct manifestation of racist activity (see for example data on racism in Ireland from the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration 2014). This paucity of data translates into an inability of the Irish State to construct informed policies that could challenge anti-Muslim racism. This study, based on the evidence presented below, proposes that the Irish State must recognise anti-Muslim racism as a distinct phenomenon if it is to challenge it. It is argued here, that, by recognising anti-Muslim racism as a distinct phenomenon, the Irish State, through in particular An Garda Síochána,¹ can take a first step in a process towards the formation of evidence based, effective policies that can challenge anti-Muslim racism and concomitantly encourage the reporting of this phenomenon.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a range of research methods. A mix of differing research methods was utilised in order to draw on the strengths of various research tools that, together, could provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon at hand than either method could in isolation. Firstly, a survey that aimed to demonstrate levels of anti-Muslim racism was deemed vital for providing an evidence base of the presence and effect of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. Secondly, I also engaged in one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions in person with Muslim men and women. Together these methods developed and added depth by providing an understanding of the subjective experiences of anti-Muslim racism and the perceptions and practices held by the various participants towards the reporting and recording of this phenomenon. Used in conjunction, the various research methods employed in this study enhanced and helped to validate the conclusions of this study.

PARTICIPATION

Muslim communities in Ireland derive from multifarious ethno-national backgrounds (Scharbrodt and Sakaranaho 2011, p.474). Participants and key stakeholders in this study were sought on the basis of capturing this diversity as well as other characteristics such as: gender and age; geographic location; urban and rural considerations; aspect of Islam and levels of religiosity; and social class. Contact was initially made with representatives across Muslim communities in the main urban centres of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. These locations were selected because of their geographic spread and the likelihood that they would have a greater Muslim presence (see Central Statistics Office 2013). These sites were added to later to include an even broader geographical range while also offering the opportunity to increase participation. In all, fourteen towns and cities were targeted including: Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway, Waterford, Kilkenny, Wexford, Cork City, Killarney, Tralee, Sligo, Ballyhaunis, Portlaoise, Mullingar and Cavan. In the larger cities such as Dublin, multiple locations were selected in order to encompass the main Muslim sites across the city. In total three-hundred and forty-five Muslim men and women² took part in this research; incorporating participants from the diverse range ethno-national backgrounds, ages, genders and aspects of Islam referred to above.³ All participants were over the age of eighteen.

In what follows, in conjunction with statistical findings, I will also elaborate on the key themes that emerged during the course of this research. These include the experiences of anti-Muslim racism as discussed by reverts to Islam; the manner in which Muslim communities have been constructed as 'suspect'; issues of religious identifiability and gender. I will then discuss the perceptions and practices of Muslim men and women towards reporting anti-Muslim racism to the State. I will conclude by identifying opportunities for change related in particular to the manner in which racism can be challenged by arms of the State, focussing particularly on the role of An Garda Síochána.

ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM IN IRELAND

There is a dearth of data on rates and experiences of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. Therefore the findings related here break new ground in our understanding of this phenomenon in the Irish context. The first phase of this study comprised of a survey of Muslim men and women and

commenced by asking all those who took part if they had experienced some form of hostility⁴ in the period from January 2010.⁵ Just over half of all participants indicated that they did experience some form of hostility in that timeframe. Given that this study centres on anti-Muslim racism it was necessary to go a step further and ask a question to validate the centrality of a participant's Muslimness in these experiences. The reality is stark. Over one-in-three (36%) survey participants felt they had been targeted on the basis of their being identified as Muslim.

The manner in which this hostility manifested varied. Participants reported experiencing physical assaults (22%) ranging from being struck, having hijabs forcibly removed, to being pushed, spat at; some reported being threatened or harassed (20%). A white Irish male revert to Islam recalls his experiences of physical forms of abuse: "I have been pushed and have had people spit in my face, for being Muslim". Fewer participants (14%) indicated that they had property damaged. Those who detailed how this manifested referred to tyres being slashed, having eggs thrown at their home inter alia. Unlike other jurisdictions, attacks on Muslim property such as mosques did not feature in this study (European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia 2006, pp.66:89). Arguably, this may be the result of the paucity of recognisably Islamic structures in Ireland. The predominant form of hostility experienced was verbal assault (81%). The verbal abuse meted out to the participants in the Irish context, as will be further elaborated below, frequently makes direct reference to the contemporary form of racialised Muslim identity, indicative of an internationalised prejudicial image of Muslims and Islam.

As with data on anti-Muslim hostility, there is also dearth of official information on discrimination as experienced by Muslim men and women in Ireland on the basis of their religious identity. Reflecting the questions of hostility, participants were asked about their experiences of discrimination in the period from January 2010.⁶ One third of all participants indicated that they had experienced anti-Muslim discrimination. As with anti-Muslim hostility, experiences of discrimination, elaborated further below are heavily gendered with Muslim women (40%) almost twice as likely as Muslim men (22%) to experience anti-Muslim discrimination. It is worth noting at this point that there are striking similarities between the experiences of participants here in Ireland with those present in international evidence of anti-Muslim racism (Ameli et al 2012; European Monitoring Centre for Racism and Xenophobia 2006; Open Society Institute 2011; Poynting and Noble 2004).

EXPERIENCES OF REVERTS TO ISLAM

One white Irish female Muslim survey participant stated: "[I've been] told by a lot of people on the street I'm Irish... [I] don't need to follow Islam and betray Ireland." This chimes with studies in France and the Netherlands which also document how Muslim reverts, particularly Muslim women are perceived as 'traitors' to their nation or 'race' (Open Society Institute 2011, p.72, van Nieuwkerk 2004, p.236). The following quotes are provided by white Irish reverts to Islam. Here, they elaborate how they are perceived by some in Irish society as 'Other' and the experiences of verbal and physical abuse that can ensue on the basis of a perceived betrayal.

**When they find out you're Irish they feel that like traitor...but what because you've put a scarf on your head? Or because you changed your religion?...then [you] are no more an Irish person, you have then lost your identity of who you are, you are...classified as non-Irish.
(Aalia, Irish female Muslim)**

Faced with this misplaced perception of being a 'traitor', participants were keen to emphasise their own Irish identity and how they do belong here in Ireland, something which they saw as being taken away from them. The comments of a white Irish male Muslim revert who participated in the survey are indicative of such sentiments: "my family have been traced back to the 1700s in Ireland on both sides." During a focus group discussion, Jada, a white Irish female revert to Islam shared her experience as she went about her duty as a medical professional where a male patient: "said take that thing rag off your head you're too good looking for that...you're betraying Ireland..." Similarly, Zaheen, a female Irish revert to Islam describes her experience with a male assailant:

...I just told him look I'm not a terrorist and I'm not a foreigner I'm Irish and he just kept going and going just getting more and more [aggressive] then we crossed the road and he turned around to me and he spat in my face and I was just really shocked because that was the first; I've had comments before just about terrorism and bin Laden's wife and all these things, like whatever, but that was the first kind of like physical abuse.

**When the time came to leave....
...we went to the car park to sit down and turn on the car...we're just reversing to come out of the car park and head back...with the rest of the crowd and then Gardas came. Two Gardas in plain clothes and then two others in uniforms were standing in the near distance...they came to us and I could see most of our colleagues...going; it was just our car left in the car park near the Shannon airport...
[CTD.]**

'SUSPECT' COMMUNITIES

The following examples detail experiences of religious profiling by the Irish State. Aatif, a male Muslim participant explicitly presents the core of the concept of 'suspect community', a term originally coined in reference to Irish communities in the UK during the troubles, wherein a person is assumed to be a 'threat' or suspect on the basis of an association with a group identity, in this case Muslim.

**...there was a Garda car unmarked...outside the [masjid] for weeks watching us, we knew this and I accepted it, at times maybe it was a bit annoying...from my memory now this is back in 2003/4 after 2004 they stopped [surveillance], obviously they were satisfied we weren't harbouring any terrorists, I don't know??!! I mean what else can I think??
(Aatif, Irish Muslim male)**

Ehan describes his experience and that of his friends as they were leaving an anti-war protest. Although attended by many, Ehan noted how they were "singled out... [because] we just happened to look different".

...I was sitting in the back, so two guys [Gardaí] came in the car...inside the car and we just took it easy...they're [asking] what's your name? Do you have an ID on you? You know, whose car is this?? Where did you get it?? Where do you live?? When did you come to Ireland what do you think of Saudi Arabia?? What do you think of Hezbollah?? (Ehan South-Asian Irish Muslim male)

The impact of practices such as these that pathologise Muslim identity, positioning it as being inextricably associated with a 'suspect' identity permeates beyond the immediate context. Indeed, the repercussion of such profiling can inform broader experiences of hostility and discrimination being meted out to Muslim men and women. Repeatedly throughout this study, survey participants recalled how they have been subjected to taunts of "Muslims are terrorists"; "Suicide bombers!"; "Taliban, go back to your cave." This association was also clear in the experiences of hostility and discrimination that were reported at the hands of fellow patrons in various modes of transport. These experiences chimed with instances of anti-Muslim hostility elaborated above. Consistent across these lived experiences is the continuing the theme of Muslims as a suspect group:

I was on the bus in Jan '11 and a man kept telling the bus driver there was a suicide bomber on the bus.

(Irish Muslim female, survey participant)

[I]n the public transport people refused to sit beside us once they identify us as Muslim etc.

(Arabic Muslim female, survey participant)

In June 2011 - at the Luas station, an older man said to me and shouted, "she has a bomb in her bag", "she has a bomb in her bag", because I was wearing (burqa).

(Arabic Muslim female, survey participant)

RELIGIOUS IDENTIFIABILITY

Muslim communities in Ireland are incredibly diverse. In this study alone there are over fifty different countries of origin and multifarious ethnic groups. This diversity means that a Muslim person may be exposed to exclusionary practices on the basis of any one of their identity characteristics including but not restricted to gender and skin colour. Bearing this diversity in mind it is necessary "to account for multiple grounds of identity" and how they might intersect in the participants' experiences of anti-Muslim racism (Crenshaw 1991, p.1245). Survey participants were asked to indicate which aspects of their identity they felt played a role in their experiences of anti-Muslim racism. Skin colour (47%), cultural identity (45%) and real or perceived immigrant status (37%) as markers of 'Otherness' all featured strongly as intersectional factors in the participants' experiences; demonstrating the multiple bases of exclusion that Muslim men and women can encounter in Ireland. Qualitative commentary also highlighted how 'traditional' racisms intersect with anti-Muslim sentiment: "[been] called: nigger, bin laden, go back to where you came from" (Male, Arabic-Irish survey participant).

However, of all the personal identity characteristics to be cited by participants, the overriding trait indicated as being a factor in experiences of anti-Muslim racism was religious identity. In experiences of hostility the vast majority of participants (81%) stated that their religious identity played a role in their being targeted for abuse. A similar number (87%) felt their religious identity factored in their experience of discrimination. The importance of Muslim identifiability is made perfectly clear in comments shared by participants. Fahima details the experience of a female Muslim friend who wears the niqab had when out shopping with her young child. Fahima explains:

[A Muslim] lady [at] one of the kiosk sweet sections in the centre of the shopping centres [was with] her young son; he...wanted a packet of crisps...this lady wears the niqab... she stood there [at the counter]...the [staff member] was engrossed in a conversation with a friend across the counter...she [Muslim woman] said "excuse me!" She was ignored. She said four times and she was ignored, completely dismissed...another lady came up to purchase something and was served immediately.

Others recalled experiencing discrimination when trying to access accommodation:

Once when looking for a house to rent, we had reached an agreement by phone (before they had met with us). After viewing the house, the landlord came up with some excuse (apparently because of the fact that we are Muslims). (Northern European Muslim woman, use of brackets is hers)

My findings provide strong evidence that there is a relationship between being identified as Muslim and anti-Muslim racism. Even if the identification as Muslim is misplaced:

My [friend]...was stabbed...there was two guys, he was outside his door...they shouted you F####n Osama bin Laden... [a] knife ripped through his hand. (Kulvir, a South-Asian Sikh male whose friend and co-religionist was assaulted on the mistaken assumption that he was Muslim)

The findings of this study demonstrate that both Muslim men and women experience discrimination when they are identified as Muslim. When we think of a person being recognisably Muslim we may first think of the hijab, the burqa or the long beard. However, revealing ones name in a job application also reveals ones' Muslimness.

The following male participant found his job interview focussed inappropriately on his faith even though he was devoid of overt markers of Muslimness but for his name.

During job interviews, questions are more focused on religion, although that I do not practice it. It is more like hiring an Irish [person] for management position and ask[ing] him / her about being Catholic. For every single interview I attended, it is exclusively about Islam and Muslims, the fact of being secular doesn't mean anything, then and during the interviews. I know it very well that I was asked to come for questioning and having a job, after an interview focused on what type is my religion rather than my educational background or previous multinational experience, [the interview] was ending as it always used to end. I became intimidated of attending further interviews because of the religious or ethnic prejudice [that] has already formed in the mentality of the interviewer and I became guilty until proven innocent. (Arabic Male Survey participant)

A female perspective on employment discrimination is provided by Jeehan, a Black African Muslim woman who wears a "full long hijab", recalls her experiences of looking for work during an interview:

I went to a clothes shop and a restaurant/ coffee shop. The girl in the coffee shop actually she smiled "I don't think you'll get work here", meaning because of the way I was dressed. I left CV for the manager who was out. I left CV in sports clothes shop. The guy working there, not the manager, said "I don't think you will get a job because of the way you are dressed... he didn't even hide it...when I left him I thought maybe he said that because he compared with my clothes to the uniform of the shop. At this point I was wearing a full long hijab, I was new here.

Analyses of the different areas where participants reported experiencing discrimination reveals an interesting pattern when broken out across the sexes. In areas where Muslim men become more identifiably Muslim, for example where they have provided their names in job applications or in accessing education, Muslim men experience similar or higher rates of anti-Muslim discrimination than Muslim women. However, in areas where being identified as Muslim requires the presence of more overt markers of Muslimness, Muslim women reported higher rates of discrimination in locations such as public transport (44%) or restaurants (16%), compared to respective rates (14% and 6%) for Muslim men.

GENDER AND ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM IN IRELAND

I now want to turn specifically to the experiences of female Muslims in Ireland and the gendered inflections of anti-Muslim racism. Differences arise in terms of gender and how recognisably one is as Muslim. The vast majority of Muslim women (86%) that took part in this survey stated that they were "Identifiably Muslim" compared to less than half of Muslim men (46%). Moreover, the overwhelming majority of Muslim women (96%) who experienced hostility in this study reported that they were religiously identifiable compared with just under half of Muslim men. A similar pattern emerged in

relation to discrimination where again the vast majority of Muslim women (98%) who experienced discriminatory practices stated they were religiously identifiable compared to a much smaller number of Muslim men (45%).

Survey findings are clear on this point with Muslim women (44%) reporting higher levels of anti-Muslim hostility than Muslim men (28%); and, as already noted, female Muslims (40%) reported higher levels of discrimination than their male co-religionists (22%) overall. Differences also emerged in the survey and interview data that demonstrate while taunts such as 'terrorist', 'suicide bomber', 'foreigner' and 'Paki' may be deployed in a similar manner across genders; others are peculiar to men or women. There are differences in the perceived commodification of Muslim women, clear for example in that while Muslim men are called 'bin Laden', Muslim women are referred to as 'bin Laden's wife'. The following quote details experiences of both verbal and physical abuse experienced by a female Arabic Muslim survey participant:

Been called 'filthy Arab', hijab pulled, drenched with beer Tuesday August 2010... Weekend March 2011...Empty can [was] thrown at me from moving car while yelling 'F-ing terrorist' Midweek afternoon Sept 2011

These findings demonstrate that, in the Irish context, one's sex has real implications in terms of being targeted for anti-Muslim hostility. The targeting of Muslim women is directly related to their identifiability as Muslim. Dwyer (1999, p.7) argues that Muslim women are perceived in the 'West' as "passive victims of oppressive cultures...the embodiment of a repressive and 'fundamentalist' religion". The repercussions of these discourses are clear as Ghadir, a female Muslim demonstrates: "they think that like everyone that wears a scarf is oppressed..."

The racialised symbolism of Muslim women being oppressed is a powerful theme in this study evident in both manifest and latent hostility. "You get the same questions, you know, the women are put down...is your husband domineering?" (Jada, female Irish revert to Islam). This perception of being oppressed is met with frustration. Participants demonstrated what I refer to as 'oppression fatigue' as succinctly put by Samira: "It's really tiring" and sarcastically by Sara "you no longer care; you are like: yeah I'm oppressed!!"

Not only do the women express their tedium at being typecast as oppressed, submissive 'victims', they are also keen to demonstrate that they are their own agents, that they are intelligent, engaging people, despite the stereotype of Muslim women as intellectual 'dopes' that cannot 'save' themselves. In the case of Irish reverts to Islam, a common perception they are greeted with is one whereby they are deemed lacking in both agency and intellect and must have been coerced and simultaneously duped into taking the Shahadah. This marks a further point of frustration for female Muslim reverts who are keen to underscore that it was their decision to choose Islam, not their husbands':

I chose to be this religion. It's not because I'm married to a Muslim, because everyone meets me [asks] 'oh you must be married to a Muslim then and that's why you're a Muslim'. Hello!! I have my own brain! I can think for myself! (Ghadir, Irish female Muslim)

The discourse of oppressed Muslim women also serves to 'legitimise' the deployment of 'liberation tactics' by those who would be 'liberators' of the oppressed. The impact these 'tactics' have on the Muslim female participants in this study includes shock, depression, feelings of fear and vulnerability. Jada explains how she was told to "take that thing rag off your head you you're too good looking for that" by a patient in the hospital she works in. The impact this had on Jada was:

Am you just feel low you just feel like you know he's really almost taking all my clothes he's exposed me and he did it in front of everybody...it's not just him either I've had it a few times and am this is just one case I can think of.

At times these tactics manifest as assaults which sometimes involve threatening behaviour and vulgar sexualised practices. One Muslim female participant related how she was: "Followed home, pulled aside, asked if I was 'open for business'..." (Arabic female Muslim survey participant). The fear and shock this Muslim woman experienced was understandably palpable.

A female participant details a “very shocking...atrocious” experience that happened to two teenage Muslim girls (aged 15 and 16) on the LUAS in Dublin.

[They were] coming home, they took the LUAS one day and there was some people...a couple, a young man and a young girl and they were remarking on....they used the term the alleged chastity of the girls and they performed oral sex on the on the LUAS that day and that was absolutely, I remember [one of the girls] being absolutely distraught she actually jumped off the LUAS at the spot.

It is ironic that in all of the examples above, Muslim women, assumed to be oppressed and repressed, and alleged ‘property’ of Muslim men, are being ‘liberated’ through acts of coercion and (re)appropriation. Instead of being liberated, these Muslim women become manifestly oppressed at the hands of their assailants. These acts of ‘liberation’ are not always of a sexual nature, yet the hijab and the niqab retain a central role in the experiences of anti-Muslim hostility as directed towards Muslim women. Participants recalled, with notable similarities, the manner in which their hijab or niqab had been forcibly removed by complete strangers. Indeed, it is almost expected. As one survey participant put it: “since I am a female Muslim I got to experience that my scarf got pulled down off my head in school” (Arabic Muslim woman).

**Once my Mam and my two sisters and my youngest sister were walking toward the sea in peace; my Mam and my little sister came...in the summer [to] Holliday to Dublin and [were] visiting my sisters who study there...They all went to the sea without any man with them, two big Irish men came to them, one of them tried to take off my sister headscarf. It was really bad experience for my family.
(Arabic male survey participant)**

The findings discussed thus far illustrate not only the fact that this form of racism is alive and well in Ireland, but also the complex and multifaceted manner in which it persists. The experiences detailed in this study may not be those of every Muslim in Ireland. However, for some of those participating in this research racism is perceived as ‘normal’. It is worthwhile, indeed necessary, to underscore this point by foregrounding the participants own voices, Zaheen:

[Y]ou take it as a norm, you know people don’t like Islam you’re going to get that racism but we just think like, ok, it’s going to happen we just have to take it and be strong from it like because there’s nowhere we can report it or if we do report there’s nothing done about it.

It is striking and disheartening to hear repeated in so many narratives, not only that racism is something experienced so much, but also the implicit resignation to the normalcy of this reality on the part of some participants. If the Irish State is serious about policing racism, effective action must be taken to change this ‘norm’ as described by participants. It is to this topic I now turn.

(NON)REPORTING ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM

The evidence presented thus far is stark. Anti-Muslim racism is a lived reality for Muslim men and women in Ireland. Having established the presence of anti-Muslim racism, I will now focus on the topic of the recording and reporting by those who have experienced anti-Muslim hostility and discrimination. Official statistical rates of racism in Ireland demonstrate a decline in racist incidents over the past six years (Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration 2014). However, the underreporting of racist incidents is in fact well documented in Ireland. Various studies have demonstrated that rates of reporting experiences of racism range from a poor one in five to a dismal one in ten, meaning the vast majority of racist incidents go undocumented (Browne 2008; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2009 p.50; McGinnity et al 2012, p.xii). Common factors in the underreporting of racism include: poor levels of trust in the police; a belief that nothing will be done should one report; the view that racism is so regular as to be impossible to report each

incident; a lack of awareness as to where to report; fear of secondary victimisation; poor past experiences of reporting; self-reliance inter alia (Smith et al 2012, p.20; European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2009; Lynch 2011, pp.8-9; Poynting and Noble 2004, p.14; Spalek 2002, p.70).

Of those who had experienced anti-Muslim hostility, one in three (36%) said they reported it. This rate of reporting, while low, is higher than expected, and this may be an artefact of the sample in this study which includes a large number of students and professionals. Research has demonstrated that higher levels of education and an awareness of one's rights and knowledge of where to report increase the likelihood of one making a report to an official body (McGinnity et al 2008). In all cases, the vast majority of reports were made to An Garda Síochána. Those who stated that they had experienced anti-Muslim discrimination reported at a rate of one in five (22%). Interestingly, An Garda Síochána was also the site where reports of discrimination were made (7 reports) even though discrimination in terms of accessing goods and services falls outside of their remit. Other bodies such as the Equality Authority (2) and the Equality Tribunal (3) also received reports. The numbers are too small to make any generalisations regarding service levels.

The following sections will concentrate on experiences of Muslim men and women interfacing with An Garda Síochána. The reason for focussing on the Gardaí is premised on the focus of the broader study of which this is part. It is worth noting that while negative experiences with An Garda Síochána are recounted below, I did encounter evidence of some very positive interactions also. It is important to bear in mind that some members of the Garda service demonstrated clear professional practice, in particular those from the Garda Racial Intercultural and Diversity Office (GRIDO), and Community Gardaí.

In the Irish context, community policing is perceived as a vital conduit for the generation for trust and confidence between the police and myriad communities (An Garda Síochána 2009, p.5). Community representatives from diverse aspects of Islam participating in this study related their positive experiences of Garda outreach, including the benefits of having a regular Garda presence at the mosque. According to community representative Azim: "the community Garda... they come once a week and every Friday after prayer they'll sit down here, they'll hear the complaints" thus creating a platform wherein trust can be engendered. Azim noted during our

interview how he relied on his local Community Garda as a first point of contact for any issues that may arise. By simply being there to take questions or address issues trust can be built with members of minority communities that may otherwise mistrust agents of the State. During an interview, one community leader in particular, Saad, demonstrated first-hand the role that outreach by local Community Gardaí played in encouraging him to report his experience of racism. Saad encountered anti-Muslim hostility during a quick visit to a local supermarket where he was subjected to verbal abuse by a man and a woman. During the course of the abuse Saad informed them he was going to use the video function on his phone to record the tirade of abuse he was being subjected to:

I thought ok what should I do, should I tell the Gards or not?...It was not my intention to... but...the week before or two weeks before I had visits from the Gards and they gave me some leaflets about [reporting] racism and all this thing so I thought, ok, I was brave about this thing so I better go and tell the Gards...so I rang one of the community relations Gards...I think by chance he was on duty so I went straight to him and I explained the scenario and I played the recording and he was shocked he said wow you know if I had told this thing to people here they would think this doesn't exist so he gave me a CD...I went to my laptop...recorded and handed it over to him, after a while, maybe about few weeks...I met up with him again and he told me that they managed to track that guy...they located his car registration from [supermarket] security camera and he was asking me...do you want us to prosecute him...I said no...I think they caution him.

When asked about the importance of the Garda visit and distribution of leaflets detailing how to report an instance of racism, Saad clearly states that:

[I]f they didn't come I don't think I would have reported it...maybe I would have just had the same feeling of everyone like there is no point in reporting to the Gards I'll just keep it to myself.

Community representatives were also clear regarding the esteem in which they held members of the GRIDO and Community Gardaí in general, and the benefits of regular interaction with members of the service. Fahima sums it up:

Oh yes I would always applaud anybody to be in touch with them, they're fantastic... they'll come [and visit]...I've known the reaction...a member of the intercultural office came and spoke to [a]...group...he came and spoke and left [the group]...they couldn't believe not only for the Gardaí but that such an office existed... how well it worked with the Muslim community and how well he was able to dispel a lot of the misconceptions about Muslims in general without being Muslim.

The importance of strong relationships and outreach to those who are vulnerable to racism and those interfacing regularly with minority communities cannot be understated; it is vital in building trust and ensuring that people will report experiences of racism. However, while Fahima may encourage people for contacting the Gardaí, it is important to bear some additional considerations in mind. Representatives of community groups are privileged in terms of accessibility to members of the GRIDO and Community Gardaí. It is highly unlikely that the average member of the public will have the same level of access and familiarity as those who regularly interface with appointed Community Gardaí or members of the GRIDO. Indeed, the experience of the average Muslim person is, as will be demonstrated below, at odds with those of the aforementioned community representatives.

Research published on behalf of the Migrant's Rights Centre of Ireland (Migrant's Rights Centre Ireland 2011, p.25) demonstrates the lack of faith that Muslim women may have in the Gardaí on the basis of their experiences of being 'racially'-profiled by the service. Indeed, I have already detailed above the experiences of Aatif and Ehan and the manner in which they were subjected to profiling by members of An Garda Síochána, constructed as part of the 'suspect community'; singled out purely due to their Muslim identity. These practices build on other negative experiences of policing at home and abroad that can result in minorities holding a suspicion of the police which can militate against the chances of reporting any crime, let alone racism.

[S]ome people would report things to the Gards...others would not because people are a little bit hesitant to go to the Gards...could be because they might have had difficult experience...in the home country and they might have had difficult experience in Ireland with the Gards here so it could be one way or the other...some of them would go and others would not. (Sab, Arabic Muslim Male)

This lack of trust in the Gardaí is not restricted to migrants. Aatif is an Irish Muslim and has experienced a diverse range of interactions with An Garda Síochána, reporting instances of criminal damage and assault. The manner in which he has been treated by some Gardaí has induced a hesitancy in him when it comes to interacting with members of the service. Aatif narrates the effects of one such negative interaction where, after he reported a crime he himself became the subject of investigation.

[M]y wife's car was hit...when the Gards turned up here's a woman standing in long niqab, hijab standing on the side of the road with her husband with his with long beard and topi [skull cap] the Gards came straight to us and said: so did you hit this car? They assumed we were the ones that hit the car...we weren't assumed to be the victims... the Gard assumes it must be the fault of the foreigner rather than the fault of the native of Ireland...the first question he put to me was, how long are living here?...He asked do you have residence do you have your GNIB card?...I went Garda, you're here to investigate a car being hit, not whether we have residence or permit...that's when he asked me where are you from, where do you live, I said am I'm from Ireland I'm born in Ireland, I'm Irish and things changed immediately.

The effect of such experiences on Aatif is clear...

I can be honest and I tell you that since that incident actually I often go on the HIGH STREET [for Da'wah]...any Gard that approaches our table, I always now I'm hesitant with them because I don't know why they are coming and that's bad for me am when I lose the confidence of trusting a Gard...will he treat me properly will he treat us properly that's quite bad, that's quite bad.

An Irish Muslim recalls one experience that was related to her by:

One [Muslim Gentleman who] was going into his local police station because of an on-going issue with his family and the Gardaí...when he was entering in to make a complaint about two Gardaí that came to his house, the [same] two Gardaí exited the police station and wouldn't allow him enter, [they] blocked him and one of them...allegedly...told him what to do with himself...His English wasn't great so he came to me...distressed completely distressed, he said obviously I can't go I'm afraid now so [after taking advice he] made a report to the ombudsman and they took it very...they took it to as serious.

The above examples clearly evidence why a person would be afraid to report an incident of racism to An Garda Síochána on the basis of previous interactions with the force. These do not need to be direct, even hearing of these events could have the effect of discouraging a person from making an approach to a member of An Garda Síochána.

Various participants made reference to stories they had heard of people's experiences of reporting to An Garda Síochána. As a migrant, Jeehan (Black African female Muslim) has been informed by fellow immigrants of the 'dos and don'ts' if one is to secure citizenship: "If you tell [report to] the Gardaí it will be written in your report and will damage your chances of citizenship." According to Jeehan, "people advise me not to report because of this." A'idah, an Arabic Muslim woman recalls a discussion she had with another female Muslim about making reports to the police. Here again A'idah demonstrates the effect that negative community discourses of past experiences of reporting can have on the likelihood of one making a report to the Gardaí in this instance:

I ask[ed] one of my close friends in the community...did you report that to the police? "No...I didn't report because they won't listen" ...one time she said that she knows a story about a friend in the community, Arab Muslim woman, she reported but the Garda never listened to her, never come back or never called her back or never check on her again later to see if her problems are resolved or not and why? Because Garda knows they are Muslim woman so they know already that the Garda doesn't care about them because they are a Muslim.

[B]ecause I had gone to the Equality Tribunal once before and lost because they said it was not racism because I'm white Irish, although it occurred because my Muslim dress makes me appear foreign. (White Irish female Muslim)

In addition to other barriers, the failure to recognise a diverse range of racisms – in this case anti-Muslim racism - effectively directs people away from making report their experiences to the various authorities of the State, creating an uncertainty as to what they should do in such instances. This can manifest in a feeling that racism is something that has to be ignored and accepted.

UNCERTAIN COMMUNITIES

In addition to what can be perceived as overt instances of institutional racism⁷ detailed thus far, poor experiences when reports have been made in the past may also result in subsequent complaints not being brought to the attention of the relevant authorities due to a lack of confidence that they will be met with effective action. One Muslim woman in particular related the manner in which her experience of anti-Muslim racism failed to lead to a successful outcome through the previously established equality mechanisms as it was not recognised as racism as the person in question is a white Irish Muslim.

The failure on the part of the State to recognise anti-Muslim racism discouraged this lady from making any future reports to the State:

'ACCEPTANCE'

Participants repeatedly referred directly and indirectly, to ignoring and in doing so tolerating their experiences of racism instead of taking any action such as making a report. The rationales employed by participants who chose to ignore their experience of racism instead of reporting it varied. For example some "did not find it important to report" while others chose "not to prolong the incident". Likewise a community representative perceives that: "there's a certain reluctance to report because they're saying people will see if I don't report maybe it will go away". Some participants did not see the need to report their experience of racism at all "because I think that is not common and it's just from some people" (male survey participant) implying that a certain level of racism is 'acceptable'. Ignoring the incident was the most frequently reported reason for not going to the authorities upon experiencing anti-Muslim racism. For Nasirah there is nothing exceptional about experiences of racism which are:

[P]retty normal when you are walking around the town sometimes people will pass by you and they'll just say something...you...learn to ignore it...if you pay attention to it you're bringing trouble on so it's like bullying, you just ignore it don't look at them or don't look them in the eye they kind of move off. (Nasirah, South Asian Irish)

Responses of this variety are often infused with acceptance, i.e. an acceptance that the micro-aggressions of everyday racism will always be with us as elaborated by Sikh interview participant Kulvir: “you have to tolerate certain amount of racism if you have to live in Ireland”. Repeated experiences of the ‘everyday’ sort of racism while not always ‘serious’ in and of themselves can have the effect making those on the receiving end feel as though they do not belong (Poynting and Noble 2004, p.14).

Participants also operate a system of grading their experiences of racism for severity: the more threatening or hostile the incident the more likely that it will be reported. Thus decisions on making a report are contingent on whether they are, as Jada puts it “violent yes but not the normal”, common forms of abuse. This may be understandable given the frequency of experiences of racism. Jeehan elaborates:

[W]here I have been called insults or bad words I would not call the police. I don't think there is anything they could....If something causes injury I will definitely report it, something easy [less severe] I will not report. I don't want to keep on going back to 4-5 times per month.

FEAR AND FUTILITY

Participants also expressed a fear of reporting their instances of hostility to the Gardaí. This is unsurprising given the police practices engaged in within certain states may be discriminatory and at times lethal (Perry 2009, pp.4-5). Jada, an Irish female revert to Islam, felt that some Muslim migrants “wouldn't find the Gards approachable” because of corrupt policing abroad. However, in some cases this fear of reporting was grounded in past experiences with An Garda Síochána here in Ireland, as demonstrated in the examples outlined above and reflected in the comments of a male Muslim participant in this study who stated that: “actually, I face discrimination several times from Garda” and as a result would not report his experience.

Worryingly, even when those who have experienced hostility are encouraged to report, the fear of repeat attacks from the original assailant and the feeling that agents of the State, An Garda Síochána, will not support them may prompt

reluctance to report. Zaheen narrates the process of decision-making torn between advice, fear and the perception that her report will not lead to a successful outcome. A fear of reprisal and a lack of faith that any official action will be taken eventually wins out and she decides not to report.

[L]ike [my husband] kept telling me go, go, go and I was like what? They're [Gardaí] not going to do anything why am I going to go there like? I was just really, really scared and I thought ok if I report it then if they catch him then he is going to come after me again and then like I was thinking ok no...they're not going to do anything it's just a waste of time. (Zaheen)

This underscores the necessity of a “safe environment” wherein people can report their experiences of racism with the knowledge that their security is paramount and the chances for repeat hostility are minimised (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2009, p.54). Similarly, a female Black African Muslim survey participant believes that if she reported discrimination at work it would affect future prospects “I believe if I complained it may affect my ability of getting another job.”

Decisions of whether or not to make a report of discrimination include a consideration of the potential for a negative escalation should one report. Fears such as this mean that people are forced to live with hostility and discrimination. Informed by past experiences and shared community discourses, participants elaborated the perception even if they were to report it would not be taken seriously and there was a lack of faith that any ameliorative action would be taken. A European male Muslim survey participant clearly felt that it was pointless to report instances of racism to the Gardaí:

What is the good reporting it, what Garda will do about? I believe they can do nothing; I even have meet racist Garda, so I do not believe they can help.

Similarly, Aalia shares her insights on the perceived futility of reporting experiences of racism to the State:

[T]hey have things...up in [the] Garda station if you're a victim of racism call 1800...I'm going for what? There is no point. If any girls came to me and said this is happening to us I'd say go to an NGO! I certainly wouldn't say go ring that number....

When asked if she would encourage someone to report their experience of anti-Muslim hostility Aalia iterates that she:

"would probably feel like a hypocrite if I advised her [friend to report]. I just don't think there's any...I didn't see anything constructive help to me and my family at all".

Being taken seriously and having a perception that action will be taken can encourage victims of racism to report their experience (Poynting and Noble 2004, p.15).

Effective action on the part of the Gardaí when faced with racist activity can reassure those being targeted and challenge the norm of this activity. Furthermore, effective anti-racism practice can enable trust to be built with groups that otherwise perceive the police and indeed broader arms of the State as lacking sensitivity towards their situation. The narratives of those who experienced anti-Muslim racism indicate that, in the absence of effective State action in terms of addressing racism, some Muslim men and women have developed strategies to deal with this phenomenon. Experiences of racism either lived by themselves or shared by

others through community discourses impact upon the daily movements and lifestyles of some of Ireland's Muslim population, as explained in an interview with Arabic Muslim female Nasimah:

[L]ike the first thing I do [is] lock my doors [of my car] even like in the town during the day and then like in the traffic light or something like that, I always close my window and I always shutting my door because, well, like I know it's never happened to me, it just like being ready...

As Nasimah's comments above demonstrate, in instances of racism, the person being targeted is selected on the basis of who they are, not what they might possess.

As evidenced here, Muslim communities experience a form of racism that operates on signifiers of Muslimness which is also and relatedly a gendered form of racism. Gardaí need to be sensitive to these differences if they are to provide a professional service to members of all communities. Participants in this study commonly narrate experiences of insensitivity and a lack of awareness by members of An Garda Síochána. Such practices erode the trust between communities and the Gardaí and remove the incentive for people to report their experiences of racism or indeed broader crime to the State. This has the effect of isolating communities, leaving them in a position of uncertainty with the perception that nobody will help.

As noted above, positive steps have been made in building relationships with diverse and vulnerable minority groups in particular through the GRIDO and Community Gardaí. In cities such as Cork, Kilkenny, and elsewhere, these Gardaí have played an important role in the creation and implementation of third party reporting mechanisms designed to encourage the voices of those that have experienced racism to be heard (Fanning et al 2011, pp.29&33; Nasc 2011, p.1). However, examples of good practice must be set in a wider context. Organisational inconsistencies persist in the wider practices of An Garda Síochána when it comes to addressing racism and assuring minorities of their security (see also Clarke 2013; Fanning et al 2011). Furthermore,

there is evidence, as demonstrated here of institutionally racist practices on the part of the service. Thus the trust encouraged by the GRIDO and Community Gardaí is undone by the practices of members of the service whose ethos is more aligned model of fire or more appropriately, 'crime fighting' than that which is cognisant of engaging the diversity of needs of a diverse Irish society.

The findings presented in this research evidence that the commitment to address racism, including anti-Muslim racism, fails to make it beyond the rhetoric espoused at the Diversity Consultations held annually by An Garda Síochána, characterised by one NGO contributor to this study as "the annual farce". What is required, among which recognising and recording anti-Muslim racism are simple steps, is meaningful intervention, a move beyond rhetoric by An Garda Síochána to address racism (See also Clarke 2013; Fanning et al 2011). An Garda Síochána must recognise anti-Muslim racism and broader forms of hate crime. Real change must come from management, be maintained by management and disseminated throughout the service as a priority.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR POSITIVE CHANGE IN THE REPORTING AND RECORDING OF ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM

Recognising, recording and encouraging the reporting of anti-Muslim racism are important first steps on the road to challenging this phenomenon. This requires practical steps in the collection and collation of data on anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. I will now set out some recommendations for positive change in the reporting and recording of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. These recommendations are informed by the international models of best practice vis-à-vis recording racism, and are aligned with the lacunae that exist in Ireland in this area, in this case of particular relevance to An Garda Síochána. If implemented, these recommendations could create an environment where those who live with racism are encouraged to report their experiences to An Garda Síochána. The resultant data could in turn be utilised by State and public actors to challenge the normalcy of anti-Muslim racism in the Irish context.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE:

- Recognise anti-Muslim racism as a specific form of contemporary racism in Irish society. The recognition of anti-Muslim racism is a first step in building trust with Muslim communities as it demonstrates the intent of the Irish State in challenging this phenomenon.
- Disseminate a clear definition of what constitutes anti-Muslim racism across all statutory bodies.
- Create and implement a specific anti-Muslim racism flag on the Garda PULSE system.⁹ This study has clearly demonstrated the existence of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. Specific crime 'flags' are already available on the PULSE system to capture Racism, Xenophobia, Sectarianism, Anti-Semitism and Homophobia. The addition of further bias motivations as flags, to both crime and non-crime events, should not be problematic once the will is there to do so.
- Make the use of such flags obligatory. This would have the effect in practical terms of reminding members of the police service to be cognisant of the motivations underlying a racist crime/non-crime incident. Furthermore, it would also go some way to bringing an anti-racism mentality to the service and remind *all* officers that it is not acceptable. In other words it would help anti-racism to become part of the organisational culture.
- In relation to both crime and non-crime events, international experience demonstrates the utility of data stored in the narrative reports of crimes/incidents which can be accessed through the use of specific search terms; similar to a word search on Microsoft word. Narrative reports offer an alternative means to capture those instances of anti-Muslim racism recorded incorrectly or not at all by Gardaí. Further, narrative data can also provide nuanced insights into how anti-Muslim racism manifests alerting the Gardaí in terms of how a particular group is being targeted, where, when and by whom.

- The use of a combination of both flags and narrative reports is preferred as a means of generating data on anti-Muslim racism than either method in isolation. A combination of flags and the use of specific relevant search terms can enable the collection and collation of data that are incredibly useful for the purposes of policing and also informing broader anti-racism policies.
- Data are not useful 'on a shelf'. Publish data on the diverse forms of racism regularly either annually or bi-annually. The emphasis is on regularity as this allows for effective comparability. Moreover, this data should also be made readily available to stakeholders outside of the criminal justice system as and when requested.

¹ An Garda Síochána is the police service in Ireland.

² Three-hundred and twenty-three took part in the survey; twenty-two people participated in either a focus group or a one-to-one interview with the author. This research was approved by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committees in the University of Limerick.

³ This study employed Respondent Driven Sampling, Snowball sampling and Purposive sampling methods to recruit participants. See Heckathorn (1997); Creswell (2007).

⁴ Participants were first asked if they had experienced hostility anytime from January 2010 in the form of: physical assault, theft, graffiti (home or work), damage to property, verbal assault, threats or harassment since January 2010. I placed an emphasis on ascertaining the extent to which people felt that they were or were not selected because they are Muslim; if participants answered 'yes' to any of the aforementioned options, subsequent questions enquired whether or not they felt that this happened because they were identified as Muslim.

⁵ The survey was distributed in September 2011 and closed in June 2012.

⁶ Participants were asked if they had experienced discrimination in the following spheres: at work, looking for work, in/accessing education, accessing health services, restaurants, public transport, obtaining accommodation, accessing financial services. If participants answered 'yes' to any of these options, subsequent questions enquired whether or not they felt that this happened because they were identified as Muslim.

⁷ "Institutional racism consists of the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness, and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people" (Ionann Management Consultants 2004, p.94).

⁸ Police Using Leading Systems Effectively (PULSE) is the data management tool utilised by An Garda Síochána for the recording and storing of data on crime/non-crime incidents reported or detected.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research was to ascertain if there were opportunities for positive change in the official monitoring of anti-Muslim racism in Ireland. I do not wish to sensationalise nor do I claim that the findings presented here are generalisable to all Muslim men and women in Ireland. Indeed I am happy to note that I also met Muslim people that have never experienced hostility or discrimination. This does not mean that anti-Muslim racism is not a reality for some. The experiences elaborated in this original research behove the State to take action and challenge the phenomenon of anti-Muslim racism. Informed by best international practice, this research provides a platform from which experiences anti-Muslim racism can be aired and discussed. Importantly, this research also lays the foundation for a challenge to this phenomenon at the level of the State. The recommendations proffered here are practical measures that can be implemented in the short term if the State is serious about challenging racism. Racism, in all forms is a reality that has to be challenged; ignoring this reality will not make it go away. It is the responsibility of all of us to challenge anti-Muslim racism.

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SUGGESTED SUPPORT SERVICES

The following list of services is provided to assist you should you feel the need of some support after participating in or indeed reading the results of this research study. Costs will vary depending on the group you contact, as will waiting times. It is hoped that this list will at least provide you with a starting point in your search for support and it is provided in good faith.

Federation for Victim Assistance:

Tel: 066 7119830

<http://victimassistanceireland.com/>

"Our mission is to offer emotional and practical support to all victims of crime. The federation is a voluntary organisation with a membership of fully trained volunteers who have a wealth of experience in caring for victims. We are recognised and funded by the commission for the support to victims of crime".

While not providing a counselling service *per se*, the Federation for Victim Assistance services include practical supports in the areas of: Victim Assistance at court; Victim Impact Statements; Assistance for Tourist Victims of Crime; Post traumatic stress disorder; and Victim Impact Statements.

Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI):

Contact details:

Tel: 01 645 8058

Serving Dublin area and beyond

<http://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/>

"The ICI Racist Incidents Support and Referral Service provides a range of supports to people who have experienced or witnessed racism....The types of supports we can provide range from referrals to counselling if that is required, information about avenues for redress, support in making a formal complaint to an appropriate agency and legal representation. If you have experienced or witnessed a racist incident you can contact our Racist Incidents Support and Referral Service on 01 645 8058. The service is available between 10am and 12.30pm and 2pm and 4pm on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Face to face meetings can be arranged by appointment."

Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy:

Tel: 01 2723427

<http://www.irish-counselling.ie>

"We provide a comprehensive telephone referral helpline to potential clients throughout Ireland. This service is for individuals, couples, children, teenagers, families, professionals, and organisations and involves providing the caller with the details of the Counselling / Psychotherapists service that is provided by our Accredited Counsellors / Psychotherapists nearest to them".

Limerick Social Service Council

Contact details:

Tel: 061 314111

Website: <http://www.lssc.ie>

"The Counselling Service provides a confidential, respectful space for people to explore their life issues, and offers a holistic approach to counselling by acknowledging that people have physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual needs."

Living Life Counselling:

Tel 01 2866729

<http://www.livinglifecounselling.com/>

"Living Life provides a broad based, high quality, non-denominational counselling service to people on social welfare and low incomes. The service addresses a wide range of issues such as Depression, Anxiety, Relationships, Addiction, Bereavement, Self Esteem, Anger & Suicide. Counselling is provided by voluntary counsellors who work with the service on a part-time basis. Living Life offers our services to clients from 5 years of age upwards".

"Living Life Counselling is a registered charity that provides professional counselling services for people who are unemployed, in receipt of social welfare benefits or on a low income. We provide affordable and accessible services for people who cannot afford to access other services".

Living Life's services are mainly aimed for people local to their offices (Bray/Arklow catchment). However, they are open to speaking to people outside of this region.

**Doras Luimní:
Limerick
Tel 061 310 328**

"Doras Luimní is an independent non-governmental organisation which works to support and promote the rights of all migrants living in Limerick. We provide a range of services, some of which are designed to meet the specific needs of the migrant community and others which are available to the wider Limerick community."

**Nasc
Cork**

NASC is a Cork based Immigrant support centre that provides a range of services including information provision, training and advocacy. You can also report your experience of racism to NASC by ringing: **021 4317411**

Visit for more information:
<http://www.nascireland.org/#/reporting-racism/4553491167>

Report.ie

"is a reporting system for the people, communities and Organisations of Ireland to document incidents of a racist nature that are occurring nationwide. People bear witness to incidences of racism every day. If you have experienced, witnessed or heard about a racist incident in Ireland there is something you can do about it."

Visit: <http://www.enarireland.org/ireport/>





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