Chapter Seven

Perceptions of Mis/Recognition:

The Experience of Sunni Muslim Individuals in Dublin, Ireland

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By utilising Axel Honneth's recognition-theoretic framework alongside empirical data, this research aims to synthesise theory and practice in order to gain a better understanding of how individuals from the Sunni Muslim community living within the Republic of Ireland's [ROI] capital city, Dublin, perceive how they are recognised within four distinct intersubjective arenas of everyday life – within their familial unit, their religio-cultural community, and the broader legal and societal spheres of interaction. This chapter aims to provide further insights into the perceptions of a relatively understudied minority population and gain a better understanding of the recent transition the ROI has made from being a predominantly homogenous society to one of increasing religio-cultural heterogeneity and plurality. Based on twenty-five qualitative semi-structured interviews, the research finds that although perceptions of misrecognition exist within each particular intersubjective sphere, the majority of interviewees perceive recognition as being fulfilled within the first three spheres; whilst the fourth arena – the societal sphere – is empirically verified as the location in which pathologies of disrespect are most evident and extensive, particularly in relation to various forms of discrimination and negative media representation.

Over the last twenty years, spurred on by the economic boom of the late 1990s and by economic globalisation generally, the population demographic of the ROI has noticeably

[1] This chapter is dedicated to the memory of P.J. Delaney, who died peacefully on the 17th of September 2012.

changed.[2] This process has moved the country from being a predominantly homogenous society, dominated by a conservative Catholic ethos, to one of increasing plurality in terms of racial, religious and cultural heterogeneity.[3] An indication of this gradual transformation can be viewed in the increase of new religious and non-religious communities within the state.[4] This is exemplified by the growth of a diverse Islamic community, particularly in the capital city, Dublin.[5]

As the Muslim population has increased and its presence become more visible, a small cohort of academics in Ireland and abroad have acknowledged the importance of such social transformations and initiated research into the dynamics of Muslim communities in Ireland. Such studies have focused on a variety of topical issues such as Islamophobia; the position of Islamic education and finance; the experience of converts to Islam and the public image of the Islamic religion in Ireland.[6] This chapter makes the argument that the majority of research so far conducted on Muslims communities in Ireland can be traced back to the primary

[2] Throughout the rest of the chapter, the term "Ireland" refers not to the whole island of Ireland but only to the Republic.

[3] Eoin O'Malley, *Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

[4] Olivia Cosgrove et al., *Ireland's New Religious Movements* (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011).

[5] Although Catholicism is still the religion of the majority, the 2011 census indicates that the Islamic population now officially stands at 49,204 or 1.1 percent of the total population. This is a 51.2 percent change since the previous census of 2006. See Central Statistics Office (CSO), "Profile 7: Religion, Ethnicity and Irish Travellers", *National Census* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 2006). For an historical outline of the growth of the Muslim population in Ireland, see Kieran Flynn, "Understanding Islam in Ireland," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 17, 2(2006): 223-238.

[6] See the special edition of JMMA, Saleha S. Mahmood, "A Word about Ourselves", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* (JMMA) 31, 4(2011): 467-468.

ontological issue of recognition, yet to date, no study has formally attempted to apply and ground recognition dynamics in relation to a particular Muslim population in Ireland.[7] This work attempts to fill this gap but to also promote continued research on the lived experience of Muslim communities living within nation states on the periphery of Europe.

The aim of this chapter is to gain a detailed understanding of how a selection of individuals (n = 25) belonging to the Sunni Muslim community in Dublin perceive how they are recognised or misrecognised in their everyday lives.[8] Utilising Axel Honneth's theory of recognition and

[7] By stating that recognition is an ontological concept, I am referring here to the argument emanating from Hegelian philosophy that recognition of either people; institutions; or states is fundamental to bringing these entities into "being". Laitinen clarifies the ontological relevance of recognition by stating that 'it might seem puzzling how recognition might play a role in the ontology of persons. But if we accept that human beings are *potential* persons when born, and acquiring the relevant capacities is dependent on recognition; or if we accept that being recognised is one constitutive aspect of being a person, [then] there is no puzzle'. See Arto Laitinen, "On the Scope of 'Recognition': The Role of Adequate Regard and Mutuality" in *Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, eds., Hans-Cristoph Schmidt am Busch and Christopher Zurn (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2010), 319-342. For a deeper analysis on the ethical and ontological importance of recognition, see Heiko Ikäheimo and Arto Laitinen, eds., *Recognition and Social Ontology* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

[8] It is important to distinguish between cognition and mis/recognition. On one hand, cognition is an elementary form of visible identification of an object (whether that is a person; a group; institution; or a state). On the other hand, *an expressive act of recognition is an assessment of worth* that signals future action towards a particular object. Thus, an expressive act of misrecognition refers to an object, which although visible, is ignored; overlooked, made socially invisible i.e., a misrecognised person is someone, who perceives that they are not perceived by others as they feel they should or ought to be. Using the example of Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man*, Honneth has clarified that "invisibility" represents the epistemology of recognition. See Axel Honneth, "Invisibility: On the Epistemology of Recognition." *Aristotelian Society 75*, 1(2006): 111-126.

synthesising it with narrative empirical data, this work aims to explore if the interviewees perceive positive or negative forms of recognition within multiple spheres of social interaction i.e., within their family; their Muslim community, the legal sphere; and lastly, within the wider societal sphere. Such subjective narratives give a rich and nuanced understanding of the everyday struggles that Muslim individuals' encounter within a small country located at the margins of Europe. After grounding and refining the research question theoretically, the narrative data analysis will be presented in two sections. Firstly, I will count and table the interviewees perceptions of recognition and misrecognition for each sphere, and then secondly, I will give a detailed narrative account of the perceptions solely related to misrecognition. Lastly, the conclusion will readdress the initial aims, summarise the main findings and identify potential directions for future research to explore.

2. The Struggle for Recognition

The theoretical frame to be employed is Axel Honneth's theory of recognition, which reconstructs Hegel's early Jena writings and builds upon Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action.[9] Honneth, who represents the third generation of the Frankfurt School tradition,[10] has developed a systematic typology that explains the development of a social struggle for recognition.[11] Honneth's theory is built on the main premise that the

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[9] Jürgan Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1 & 2* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984 &1987).

[10] Joel Anderson, "Situating Axel Honneth in the Frankfurt School Tradition," in *Axel Honneth: Critical Essays: With a Reply by Axel Honneth*, ed., Danielle Petherbridge (UK: Brill, 2011).

[11] Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition: The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts* (UK: Polity Press, 1995). Importantly, Tariq Modood has advocated strongly for the recognition of ethno-religious hybridity that is a constitutive element of Islamic communities in Europe. See Tariq Modood, "Anti-Essentialism, Multiculturalism and the 'Recognition' of Religious Groups," *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 6, 4(1998):

misrecognition of an individual's normative expectations creates negative moral feelings of injustice within the individual, which are then semantically shared with others enabling the formation of collective struggles of resistance to reclaim recognition. For Honneth, recognition from others is a pivotal intersubjective necessity because it is integral to identity formation and the ability to actualise individual freedom. The theoretical framework revolves around three spheres of recognition: (1) *love relations* between immediate family members, friends and erotic lovers, which equips individuals with emotional support and a basic level of self-confidence; (2) *legal relations*, in which the state recognises the individual as a morally responsible person and provides a person with self-respect; and (3) *societal relations*, in which people receive social esteem for their particular traits and abilities that contribute to the wider societal sphere. Consequently as presented in Table 1, this theory is commonly associated with three modes or spheres of intersubjective bonding: love, respect and esteem. However, slight amendments and additions have been made to Honneth's modes of recognition. Firstly, in the love sphere, this study returns to Hegel's emphasis on the institution of the family. Furthermore, out of necessity, a community sphere has been added. This sphere is larger than the intimate sphere of familial relations but small enough to be differentiated from interactions within the wider societal arena.

In practical terms, when an individual's normative expectations (of being justly treated in terms of emotional neediness, equality or achievement) are recognised and respected within a specific sphere, an individual's identity is confirmed and a positive relation-to-self i.e., a

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378-399. In terms of specifically applying a recognition framework, Yar advocates that Honneth's theory can be developed to understand the recognition struggles of Muslim communities within European states. See Majid Yar, "Honneth and the Communitarians: Toward a Recognitive Critical Theory of Community," *Res Publica* 9, 2(2003): 101-125.

person's self-worth is validated.[12] In contrast, Honneth defines misrecognition of an individual's normative expectations, through various forms of disrespect (whether that is by the disrespect of physical integrity through rape or abuse in the love sphere; or the disrespect of social integrity by the denial of rights or exclusion within the legal sphere or the disrespect of an individual's "honour" or dignity by denigration or insult within the more expansive societal sphere) as a personality threat that affects a person's individual relation-to-self i.e., a person's self-worth that is reflected in a reduction or even eradication of self-confidence in the love sphere; self-respect within the legal sphere and self-esteem within the societal sphere.

Table 1. Honneth's struggle for recognition typology[13]

Recognition Theme	Love	Legal	Societal
Mode of Recognition	Emotional Support	Cognitive Respect	Social Esteem
Dimension of Personality	Needs and Emotions	Universal Moral Responsibility	Particular Traits and Abilities
Forms of Recognition	Primary Relationships (Family; Friends; Lovers)	Legal Relations (Rights; Obligations)	Societal Relationship (Solidarity; Societal Value and Merit)
Relation-to-Self	Basic Self-Confidence	Self-Respect	Self-Esteem
Forms of Disrespect	Abuse and Rape	Denial of Rights; Exclusion	Denigration; Insult

[12] For the link between recognition and social justice, see Axel Honneth, *The Pathologies of Individual Freedom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[13] Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 129. The last two rows of Table 1 are additions made to Honneth's original table by the author.

Personality Threat	Physical Integrity	Social Integrity	"Honour"; Dignity
Public/Private	Private	Public	Public
Social Justice	Neediness/Care	Equality	Achievement

It must be noted that for Honneth, negative recognition i.e., misrecognition is important in that it enables an individual to realise, through a web of moral feelings, that their normative expectations of social justice have not been respected by others. Such feelings alert the individual to the importance of taking action (whether individually or collectively) commonly through a struggle for recognition to regain a positive relation-to-self and to affirm identities integral to being.

It is imperative now to correlate the theoretical framework with the aims of this particular inquiry. Overall, it can be concisely determined that Honneth's typology is primarily concerned with three elements. These are (1) the nature or form that mis/recognition takes; (2) the moral feelings created by the experience of misrecognition; and lastly (3), the action or struggle for recognition that individuals and/or collectives partake in. It must be stated that it is beyond the scope of this inquiry to apply Honneth's vast paradigmatic theory to its fullest extent. Instead, this paper will only try to elaborate element (1), which relates to the nature or form that mis/recognition takes. By isolating one particular aspect of the theoretical frame, the research question can be refined and demarcated into two distinct queries, *(a)* and *(b)*:

(a) *Do the interviewees perceive themselves to be either recognised or misrecognised within the different spheres of everyday life?*

(b) *If misrecognition is perceived, how does such disrespect manifest itself within a particular sphere i.e., what is the nature or form of misrecognition?*

3. Perceptions of Mis/Recognition

3.1 Overview of data

This section of the analysis will analyse query (a), by providing a count of the number of positive and negative perceptions of recognition for each sphere. [14] To compile the table below, each interviewee was asked the question of interest, which specifically asked the interviewees whether they perceived that their normative expectations of recognition were unfulfilled within the various spheres of everyday life. The narrative replies were then categorised into one of two codes: "Recognition Perceived" or "Misrecognition Perceived". The question of interest was worded as follows:

> *There are three different types of recognition, which I would like your opinion on. The first is love recognition, which is given by your family or within your Muslim community; the second is legal recognition, which is given by the state, especially in terms of citizenship; and the third is societal recognition for whom a person is, for their traits and abilities that they bring to society. Out of these types of recognition, in your opinion, which is unfulfilled?*

[14] Each interview was conducted in Dublin, digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim by the author. The names of all interviewees have been anonymised and replaced with pseudonyms. In some instances, descriptive information that may identify participants has been either amended or deleted in order to secure anonymity.

Table 2. Interviewees perceptions per sphere of everyday life

SPHERE OF EVERYDAY LIFE		Family	Community	Legal	Societal
Perception n = 25	Recognition Perceived	84%	68%	80%	28%
	Misrecognition Perceived	16%	32%	20%	72%

As Table 2 concisely illustrates, a substantial majority of the interviewees perceived that their normative expectations of recognition are fulfilled within their familial unit, their Muslim community and within the legal sphere. Correspondingly for the same three spheres, perceptions of misrecognition are low. Overall, the most striking result relates to the broader societal sphere, in which people are esteemed – or not – for their traits and abilities that they contribute to society. In other words, that their particular "way of life" is recognised as benefiting the value horizon of society. The results pertaining to the last sphere are in opposition to the first three spheres in that 72 percent of interviewees vocalised narratives that their normative expectations of recognition went unfulfilled within the broader societal sphere. Let us now move to a more detailed examination of the narrative data relating to the four recognitive spheres of interest.

3.2 Family Misrecognition

Firstly, it must be stated that the majority of the interviewees vocalised positive perceptions of recognition in relation to the familial sphere. Notably, 84 percent of the interviewees perceived recognition to be fulfilled whilst 16 percent perceived misrecognition within their familial sphere. For example, a first generation Muslim,[15] Nabeel, discussed the generational tensions that exist by articulating that the relationship between 'the father and the son… would be the top recognition'.[16] For this interviewee intra-familial recognition is important. It is the "top recognition" that is an ideal to be strived for or as he states 'that we have to dream of, you see…but still we are well away [from it]'.[17] The next three interviewees give examples of various subtle forms of familial disrespect, which are related to generational tensions. Kaleem, a convert, discussed the negative affect that his abusive father had on him as a child and in later life.

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[15] In this study, the first generation are defined as Muslims, who are aged over 37 years. The majority are immigrants, who were born and raised outside Ireland. This category also includes converts to Islam. The second generation are defined as Muslims, aged between 18 and 36, who were either born in the Irish republic or were born in a foreign country and have grown up within and spent the majority of their lives in Ireland. The author acknowledges that it is hard to define with precision the age requirements that constitute the 1st and 2nd generations. This study has followed the sampling formula set out by Pędziwiatr, who in his sociological study of young Muslim elites in Europe, defined his 2nd generation interviewees as 'men and women who described themselves as Muslims, had lived their formative years in Europe and were between 18 to 36 years old'. See Konrad Pędziwiatr, *The New Muslim Elites in European Cities: Religion and Active Social Citizenship amongst Young Organized Muslims in Brussels and London* (Germany: VDM Verlag, 2010), 128-129.

[16] Nabeel (First Gen; Male; Denizen), 13th of March 2012.

[17] Nabeel.

> After living my life here [in Dublin], ye know, I probably had an average of upbringing, ye know, my father drank a little too much and then he really drank [low tone] and eh, because of that I think we all suffered, ye know, from an early, from the earliest memories I have, yeah I've got memories of my father, ye know, really good memories, we used to go to [the] Phoenix Park, we used to take a bunch of kids from the area out to Portmarnock, yeah. All these memories, ye know, lovely ones, go shopping with them or whatever but as soon as I came to my understanding, 8, 9, 10 years of age, I realised that when he came back from being out late he was different, ye know, not good, yeah, silly with drink, and eh, [there was an] amount of trouble in my house in my teenage years.[18]

To remedy the experience of suffering familial misrecognition and to find his true identity – the interviewee established a stable form of recognition to God and a strong identity in the Islamic religion. He states emphatically about his conversion – 'I actually really did find out who I was'.[19] In other words, he came to a self-realisation about himself by developing an abstract spiritual recognition to God, or as he terms it, when he became 'a servant of God'.[20]

The next two respondents belong to the younger generation and both describe the tensions that they perceive exist between the first and second generations within their families. Firstly Isra, a young female denizen[21] with a strong Islamic identity, expresses her general opinion

[18] Kaleem, (First Gen; Male; Citizen), 17th of December 2011.

[19] Kaleem.

[20] Kaleem.

[21] Thomas Hammer categorised resident third-country nationals, who enjoy civic and social rights yet limited political rights within a host country as a new form of social status known as "denizenship". See Thomas

about the experience of young Muslim women, who take off their hijabs to socialise with friends within Dublin city's renowned nightlife. She states that 'they know that they are Muslim, and they know that they believe [in the Islamic religion] but at the same time again, they are trying also to integrate [into] the society as well'.[22] This statement expresses the unique experience of young Muslim women, who are caught in a recognition dilemma between two love relationships – the need to be recognised by their friends and by their immediate families, who adhere to and recognise Islamic religious traditions and practices i.e., a social unit in which God is recognised through particular behaviour. It becomes apparent through the narratives that Muslim youth in Ireland are struggling to create a balance between recognition spheres in order to maintain respectful relationships to others while also continuing to develop and realise their own individual identities. This dilemma is re-iterated by Isra, when she reflects on her own experience:

> For example, if I, my family see me not wearing scarf and going around and wearing trousers it will cost me problem because I can lose the relation [between] myself and my family because of my dress and all that and again when I see in my friend[s], they all dress and they look nice. I like the fashion, the way they are. I will try to be like the way they are and then again, at the same time, I have to hide it. So, it's really a big problem between the family [and] the new generation [of young Muslims].[23]

Similarly, Azad expresses the generational difficulties that he has experienced within his

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Hammer, *Democracy and the Nation State. Aliens, Denizens and Citizens in a World of International Migration* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1990).

[22] Isra (Second Gen; Female; Denizen), 29th of November 2011.

[23] Isra.

familial environment. He perceives himself to be different from others in his family – '[I] kinda find sometimes I live in my own other world compared to what folks at home are living in'.[24] This disconnection is not of a physical nature but is one of ideas and perceptions, which relate directly to conceptions of identity. Like many young European Muslims, Azad conceives of his form of Islam as universal. In other words, it is an Islam that aims to return to the meaning of the Islamic sources – to the Qur'an and the Sunna; an Islam that is not influenced or tainted by particularistic ethno-cultural or nationalistic identities; an Islam that has a strong civic component that is legitimised by the past actions of the Prophet Muhammad during his exile in the multicultural city of Medina.[25] On the other hand, Azad's family elders, who are immigrants to Europe – are viewed in a negative light in that they have a cultural form of Islam, in which home-country ethnic traditions have merged with and effect how they practice their Islam in everyday life. The interviewee expresses this disconnection as follows:

> You see like I have parents, and uncles, the older guys but the way they kinda view things is quite very different to the way I see them. So, in a way, like kinda sometimes I feel like I'm just living my own [way]…in terms of ideas, or when it comes to ideas or somethings, I just find myself, way, a bit out from m[y relations], their own way of thinking…so, it's a bit different because at the same time you don't want to draw yourself into these conflicts so you can keep quiet on certain aspects even if you don't

[24] Azad (Second Gen; Male; Citizen), 23rd of November 2011.

[25] There has been a growing interest in how the 2nd generation Muslim youth in Europe are negotiating identity issues. See Tariq Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim* (UK: Islamic Foundation, 1999); and also Karen Phalet et al., "Ways of 'being Muslim'" in *The European Second Generation Compared: Does the Integration Context Matter?* eds., Maurice Crul et al., (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012).

agree with what they say or what they do.[26]

With the above examples in mind, it becomes apparent that when we speak of disrespect within the immediate familial structure; the negative recognition spoken of is not a reduction in or a loss of familial love as such; instead as Paul Ricoeur has stated, such misrecognition is related to a lack of approbation i.e., approval.[27] Taken from this vantage point, it can be inferred that the tension that exists between the generations within the Muslim family (and every family for that matter) is related to the recognitive granting (or not) of approval for established and newly evolving conceptions of identity.

3.3 Community Misrecognition

It must be acknowledged that a majority of interviewees – 68 percent – perceived internal community recognition to be fulfilled. On the other hand, 32 percent perceived recognition within their Muslim community to be unfulfilled. These narratives covered a variety of personal experiences such as the negative impact related to generational tensions within the Muslim community; a lack of community leadership and representation; a lack of support for womens' civic action within the community; and lastly, a lack of acceptance towards and support for converts to Islam. Two young interviewees, Isra and Azad, commented that the generational tensions that affect the familial sphere also permeate internal relations within their Muslim community. Isra discusses forms of community rejection experienced by other

[26] Azad.

[27] Ricoeur defined approbation as 'to mutually approve each other's existence'. Paul Ricoeur, *The Course of Recognition*, trans., David Pellauer (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 188–196.

young Muslim women, like herself, who want to participate in communal social activities i.e., sports and the arts but are prohibited by familial and community norms, in which such acts when conducted by females are viewed as a form of spiritual misrecognition. She states that

> a lot of young people they really want to get involved but again, and let's say [for example], we did an acting class within groups and there was some young Muslim girls who was taking part and then, you know, they were told that they cannot do it because of the religion and stuff like that…it's a problem, it's really [a] problem. A lot of young Muslim women they want to take part [in] football and stuff like that [sport] but they were rejected because of the community, because of their family and they were told "ah em, you cannot do this because of this way and this way" and again sometimes it's actually for, as we say [the] new generation citizen, their brain can actually think that the family are forcing [them] to have this religion and they're thinking "oh, I don't really know what religion I have now because if I'm a Muslim I was told I cannot do this, I cannot do that, I cannot and I don't know what to do", that's why you see some people they don't really care about the family, they just go and do their own thing.[28]

Azad also vocalises how generational differences permeate community relations. His opinion is that young Muslims are 'frustrated' and 'lack somebody to look up to'.[29] This interviewee has negative feelings towards the home-country mentality of the first generation and how such traditional acts of recognition isolate Muslim youth, who are growing up with a different mentality in a different context i.e., within the European environment.

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[28] Isra.

[29] Azad.

> So in a sense, if you go to the mosque…you'll find most of the time the old people will be there, and not so much of the young people and part of it is maybe language barriers as well because the old folks they speak maybe Arabic of which the [young] guys here, they don't and if they're to have, let's say, lecturers or something [are invited] from there [outside Ireland], and all be towards, give towards Arabic kinda thing of which the young guys kinda feel left out. So you can't really do much of the things. So in a sense, the issues they face, we face most of the time, it's, it's alot of issues but the main one, is to be like, being left out, like not being part of the whole, [the] whole process because of the old guys, the old guys with their own mentality and then the young guys coming up kinda caught in the mix.[30]

In terms of a lack of leadership and representation, three interviewees mention how they felt inappropriately represented by one of the largest mosque organisations in Ireland, which the Irish government has developed a strong connection to and views as a point of contact to the Islamic community. Such representational misrecognition has been identified also by Adil Khan, who researched the disconnection between the large mosque organisations and the grassroots of the community.[31] In parallel to practical recognitive disagreements related to better media representation and which language should be used in mosques, two interviewees perceive that they are not recognised by the mosque leaders due to differences related to

[30] Azad.

[31] Adil H. Khan, "Transnational Influences on Irish Muslim Networks: From Local to Global Perspectives," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* (JMMA) 31, 4(2011): 486–502.

ideological positioning.[32] Both of these interviewees criticise the main mosques in Dublin as promoting an Islamist interpretation of Islam, which does not leave room for opposing interpretations from other members within the diverse Muslim community. Another interviewee - Akhtar - perceives that he is not represented by the leaders of the Sunni Muslim community in Dublin. As well as viewing the main mosque establishments as undemocratic and not representative of the grassroots, he is highly critical of the presiding Imams, who have a low proficiency in the English language. Akhtar states his concerns as follows:

> Within the community, yes, the people who are representing us, they're not elected. They are [representing], for some reason, because they speak louder, or because they've got more money or because they've got...They can quote you this fiqh and that rule, Islamic rule – they are deemed to be leaders and they may not be really representative. They just might be proactive and for that reason they might be considered as leaders. They're really not representative.[33]

Female interviewees Dahlia and Safeerah continue the criticism but focus specifically on community support. Both interviewees express, as members of a female Islamic-civic group, their struggle to gain support for charitable work conducted in their local district. As Safeerah states, the group's struggle for the recognition of Islam's civic and contributory potential, resulted in 'fighting both'[34] i.e., the generalised perceptions that exist broadly within the expanse of Irish society but also within their Islamic community.

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[32] Sayyid (First Gen; Male; Duel Citizen), 17th of October 2011 and Adeeb (First Gen; Male; Citizen), 27th of October 2011.

[33] Akhtar (First Gen; Male; Denizen), 10th of October 2011.

[34] Safeerah (First Gen; Female; Duel Citizen) and Dahlia (First Gen; Female; Citizen), 1st of December 2011.

The last example of community misrecognition comes from a recent convert to the Islamic religion. Adam narrates his personal struggle to be recognised – "for who he is" – within his newly adopted religious community. Gaining recognition does not come easily for the interviewee but is a struggle in which personal communication is a tool that is utilised to obtain trust, acceptance and a deeper level of respect from others in the community. For this interviewee, levels of support for new converts to the Islamic religion could be constructively improved by the Muslim community itself. This experience is narrated as follows:

> As a new Muslim especially, ye know, I would give "salaam alaikum" to almost any Muslim I see and 9 out of 10 of them would ignore me. Even if I'm dressed in a long shirt, ye know, I'm obviously Muslim from how I dress today, ye know, and they will ignore you. I think, I think we need to build on that within the community…in the Muslim community yeah there's a little bit of a struggle for recognition, ye know (low tone). It takes me an hour to get in there [to the mosque], so I'm not in the mosque on the time [I should be], ye know, so there is that sense of like wariness and like "oh, who's he?" and stuff like that but ye know, you have to fight for it, to gain recognition you just say "hello, my name is X", ye know.[35]

By looking back through the narrative data of perceived disrespect within the community sphere, two general themes emerge – a lack of representation and a lack of community support.

[35]Adam (Second Gen; Male; Citizen), 10th of December 2011.

3.4 Legal Misrecognition

A large majority of interviewees – 80 percent – did perceive legal recognition to be fulfilled. In contrast to this majority, 20 percent vocalised a negative perception of legal recognition. These perceptions varied from statements about the denizen experience; to a citizen perceiving herself to be unequal to others due to her "foreign" traits; and finally, to opinions that the Irish constitution and its respective laws should reflect a deeper respect for the Islamic religion and basic human rights generally.

The experience of denizens is important within this section because they do not have full legal recognition, which may affect the length of their residency and impedes their level of political participation.[36] It is therefore interesting to view how this group perceives legal recognition, particularly in terms of civic status. In total, six denizens were interviewed yet only one denizen and one citizen mention negative experiences of recognition associated with the status of denizenship. A citizen, Nurdeen, highlights the difference that separates a citizen from a denizen. He states concisely that 'in terms of legal recognition, if you're an Irish citizen you can't be kicked out of the country'.[37] Through first-hand experience of denizenship, Aziz, a second generation Muslim, outlines his difficulties and highlights the struggles encountered by his parents in gaining Irish citizenship.

[36] For a further discussion about "denizenship" status, see Ludvig Beckman, *The Frontiers of Democracy: The Right to Vote and its Limits* (UK: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009).

[37] Nurdeen (Second Gen; Male; Citizen), 5th of December 2011.

> In terms of legal recognition, I have been here for 10 years and I still have not gotten citizenship. My flatmate [who is also Muslim] and his whole family have been here for 11 years, and they have the same problems as us [in obtaining citizenship]. The thing is you can't follow up on the application, which is annoying.
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> Researcher: Why do you think you've had to wait this long to receive citizenship?
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> I've no idea, [I] can't follow up on it. I really have no idea.
>
> Researcher: Do you feel that you want to have Irish citizenship?
>
> Yes, it makes things a lot easier. For example, when going through security at airports and when I travel I have to sort out a visa, which is a hassle. I also have to pay €10,000 in university fees each year and my brother is coming through to university now and he will have to pay the same, which is a big burden on my parents.[38]

While it was assumed that denizens would vocalise experiences of legal disrespect more often than citizens, the narratives do not verify this presumption. In actuality, more citizens – four in total – expressed perceptions of legal misrecognition. This is exemplified by Furat, a young female Muslim, who shares dual citizenship with the Republic of Ireland and a Middle Eastern country. She feels that her ethnic and religious traits – her "foreignness" – negatively impact on how she perceives her legal and civic equality to others in Irish society. In the following statement, she expresses her fear that her particular difference to the identity standard or norm of "Irishness" causes her to re-think how she acts as a universal citizen of Ireland.

[38] Aziz (Second Gen; Male; Denizen), 2nd of November 2011.

> Legal recognition…myself, personal opinion, is that you always have to think twice about what you are doing legally because you always feel like as if because I'm a foreigner how will they treat me, ye know, so say, say for example, I was in a situation where somebody else was in the wrong but I'd be, I'd feel like I wouldn't be able to bring [it] up because it's not going to be dealt with that way, that person's the Irish person, I'm the Muslim, you know, the foreigner. Ahhmm, which side will they take, so you kind of, you'll always have that fear, the constant background fear of "is there a point or is there not a point [to speaking out]".[39]

Interviewees Firaq and Kaleem perceive legal misrecognition to be correlated to a lack of protective guarantees within Irish law and by how the law is practically enforced by the national security services. They both stress the need for the Irish Constitution and its respective legal system to engender respect for all people within the state and to be cognisant of the claims of minorities. They call for Irish law to respect religion and human rights. Firaq makes the point of how acknowledgement and respect for Islamic holidays is absent within the Irish constitution and its respective laws. He states in relation to Islamic holidays that 'it's very difficult to deal with them [because they] are not recognised in any constitution or law'.[40] He continues by stating that respect for all people should by an essential element of Irish jurisprudence. In his opinion, recognition should be regulated by the overarching neutral framework of the law. On this point, Firaq remarks that:

[39] Furat (Second Gen; Female; Duel Citizen), 21st of November 2011.

[40] Firaq (First Gen; Male; Duel Citizen), 19th of October 2011.

> It [respect] should be ingrained into the law that you must respect others. Ye know, not specifically, I don't think it should specifically mention the Muslims or Catholics or whatever. In general, these are human, basic human rights that they should be provided.[41]

The same interviewee also expressed a highly critical opinion of the work undertaken by the national security services. Whilst understanding the reason and need for such work, i.e., investigating people suspected of being involved in terrorist activities or criminal offenses he vocalises concern about the way in which such investigations are conducted and criticises the detrimental impact such actions have on a suspect's immediate family.[42]

> I think the way they [the security services] deal with it [the security issue]; they deal with them [the alleged suspects] as if they were in a third world country. Em, with quite a disrespect to many of the laws here [in Ireland] of freedom. They use threatening tones. They, possibly even physically threaten these people. They [the security services]... of what I hear, they actually arrive unannounced, late at night, they conduct raids and these people would have families and children who would suffer, and ye know, [it] would be very unfair for a little girl to see her dad being shoved down on the ground and treated, mistreated! When really there is nothing [no evidence]. Em, ye know…even if you need somebody it could be done in a different way, eh, in a more

[41] Firaq.

[42] To understand the construction of Muslim individuals as "suspect", see Mary J. Hickman et al., *'Suspect Communities'? Counter-Terrorism policy, the press, and the impact on Irish and Muslim communities in Britain* (London: London Metropolitan University, 2011).

> civilised way. You can take them, arrest them, deal with them – not in front of their families.[43]

The forms of legal disrespect expressed by the interviewees can be thematically generalised as a lack of protection. This is exemplified by denizen fears about residential insecurity within the Irish state; a fear of vocalising civic concerns due to the feeling of being viewed as "foreign"; and the perception that the law and its enforcers do not protect Muslim individuals in a respectful manner. Furthermore, by focusing on legal misrecognition, it is possible to identify an overlap that exists between different spheres of recognition. In other words, that legal misrecognition has ramifications on other recognitive spheres that together comprise everyday life. For example, two interviewees claim that legal misrecognition through limited citizenship status negatively impacts upon an individual's familial life. Also, a female citizen vocalised how she felt her equal citizenship status was impeded by the perception of her personal traits as being different or "foreign" to what is viewed as the dominant "Irish" identity standard. Furthermore, two interviewees linked legal misrecognition back to the familial sphere by emphasising how legally legitimated security measures can have a negative impact upon a suspect's familial environment .

3.5 Societal Misrecognition

The wider societal sphere is the form of intersubjective bond in which a minority (28 percent) of interviewees perceive recognition to be fulfilled whilst a 70 percent majority perceive

[43] Firaq; Kaleem makes a similar criticism based on first-hand experience.

societal recognition to be unfulfilled.[44] In line with Honneth's theory, which emphasises societal respect as related to the recognition of an individual's traits and abilities that contribute to society, many interviewees referenced various forms of societal misrecognition related to local community relations; discrimination within the public sphere and general misconceptions about the Islamic religion and its adherents within Irish society.

There were numerous direct statements emphasising societal misrecognition as an issue of concern. Three interviewees stated the following in this regard - 'the society one of course';[45] 'in terms of societal recognition, I think there's a lot of work to be done';[46] 'Yes, there is a concern. I would put this definitely, there is a concern'.[47] Akhtar defined his concern as 'a question of acceptability whether by the wider society or the media', which he determines will have an impact on future generations. From his standpoint, it is a question of whether the wider Irish society and media representations 'accept them [the Muslim youth] for the way they are or cast them aside as foreigners, as children of foreigners'.[48] The importance of societal recognition as compared to legal forms was stressed highly by Adeeb, who stated that the most important issue facing the Muslim community 'is [their] identity [and it is] very important that any recognition, not recognition such [as] an official [legal] recognition – only

[44] Certainly, such perceptions of misrecognition are not exclusive to individuals within the Muslim community. For example, the Travelling community in Ireland also suffers forms of wider societal disrespect. See Jane Helleiner, *Irish Travellers: Racism and the Politics of Culture* (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2000). See also Robert McVeigh, "'Ethnicity Denial' and Racism: The Case of the Government of Ireland Against Irish Travellers", *Translocations* 2, 1(2007): 90-133.

[45] Safeerah.

[46] Daleela (Second Gen; Female; Citizen), 16th of November 2011.

[47] Akhtar.

[48] Akhtar.

as on paper – but recognition as part of the society, part of the whole community'.[49] However, the narrative responses gathered suggest that being "othered" by Irish society generally is a strong perception amongst the interviewees, regardless of generational, gender or citizenship attributes.[50] This is exemplified by a concise statement made by Ayyub, who has the perception that he does 'not remotely'[51] have societal recognition but rather he feels that what he receives from Irish society is 'at the best of times, probably pity' for being "who he is".[52]

Three of the interviewees, who are of the first generation, reference a lack of societal recognition in terms of relations with their non-Muslim neighbours. These interviewees perceive that they are not accepted in full for "who they are", for their traits and abilities, by the people they live beside. Hakim suggests that whilst 'societal recognition from the local community is not forthcoming… [it] will come by time'.[53] Other perceptions are more pessimistic. Akhtar, whose family has experienced discrimination, feels 'a sense of rejection'[54] from his own neighbours. He mentions that his young daughter has asked

[49] Adeeb (First Gen; Male; Citizen), 27th of October 2011.

[50] The concept of being "othered" or "othering" has been defined by various academics from many different intellectual traditions. The following is a comprehensive definition, stated by Jenson, who defines "othering" as 'discursive processes by which powerful groups, who may or may not make up a numerical majority, define subordinate groups into existence in a reductionist way, which ascribe problematic and/or inferior characteristics to these subordinate groups. Such discursive processes affirm the legitimacy and superiority of the powerful and condition identity formation among the subordinate'. Sune Qvotrup Jensen, "Othering, identity formation and agency", *Qualitative Studies* 2, 2(2011): 63-78.

[51] Ayyub (Second Gen; Male; Citizen), 23rd of October 2011.

[52] Ayyub.

[53] Hakim (First Gen; Male; Citizen), 17th of October 2011.

[54] Akhtar.

questions about the relationship that exists with the neighbours - 'why don't they like us next door, why do they call us "Pakis", why are they rude to us'.[55] Another interviewee views such discriminatory acts as likely to increase the larger the Muslim population grows within the Irish state. He states that:

> as the population increases, recognition by neighbours, recognition is not there in the sense that they are now beginning to view [Muslims] not as students anymore but [as] that somebody, who has come to take their job away.[56]

Of the 72 percent, who perceived societal misrecognition, just over half gave direct vocalisations of discrimination that they experienced or of discrimination that they are aware of around them.[57] References were made to various forms of discrimination enacted by neighbours;[58] by people on the street;[59] towards Muslim women wearing the hijab;[60] within the medical profession;[61] and even familial disapproval towards a family member, who converted to the Islamic religion. As Akhtar states about the experience of women, who have converted to the Islamic faith:

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[55] Akhtar.

[56] Yaseen (First Gen; Male; Citizen), 26th of October 2011.

[57] Some interviewees did not vocalise their personal subjective experiences but instead vocalised narratives of societal misrecognition that had been experienced by people within their love sphere i.e., family members or friends.

[58] Akhtar; Hakim; Yaseen.

[59] Furat; Aamil (Second Gen; Male; Citizen), 18th of November 2011.

[60] Akhtar; Daleela; Furat; Mazhab (First Gen; Male; Citizen), 18th of October 2011.

[61] Yaseen.

> Irish women born and raised here who embrace Islam, if [they] decide to wear the scarf, or dress like [a] Muslim they will be cast aside or they will be considered as foreigners even though they might have an Irish accent, an Irish [ethnic] heritage, 100%. So, they become foreigners in their own country and that is prevalent, that is definitely prevalent in Irish society, unfortunately.[62]

However, such discriminatory practices can be complex and hard to define by the victim leading to doubts about the motivation behind such acts i.e., is the discriminatory act stimulated by Islamophobic; racial; ethnic; cultural; or gender intolerance; or by a combination of these.[63] In relation to this doubt, Daleela states that 'you can never know why you didn't get the job, it could be you [a lack of merit or ability required to obtain a job position] or it could be the first impression they are going to get of your culture or [religion]'.[64]

A recurring theme that emanates from all the interviews is the persistent struggle against stereotypes and misconceptions. Such narratives revolve around the role of media representations in perpetuating a negative image of Islam, and are viewed as having a detrimental affect on Muslims within Irish society. Safeerah expresses her viewpoint that the media is consistently 'speaking something bad about Muslims, it's very rarely that they [the

[62] Akhtar.

[63] For many of the interviewees, Islamophobia exists in the Irish Republic and is an issue of concern. To understand the need to recognise the "new reality" of Islamophobia, see Chris Allen, *Islamophobia* (UK: Ashgate, 2010).

[64] Daleela.

media] speak good about us'.[65] In terms of action, three interviewees – Ayyub, Furat and Nasir – emphasised that a way to counter-act such stereotypes and misconceptions is through intersubjective communication with others. For example, interviewee Nasir states the following experience:

> Some people thinking that maybe people are going to the mosque, they are learning how to kill non-Muslim and most of the people are thinking about it – "what are they doing in this mosque". I saw one [person], he was angry and he asked me "what are they doing there, learning something". [I said to him] "No, that is not [what you think], this is... religion, it is a way of life, [it's] how we live, so this is not [what you think].[66]

Nabeel highlights the mutual responsibility of both individuals within Irish society and within the Muslim community, particularly the younger second generation, to develop a better understanding and recognition of the true picture of the Islamic religion by emphasising the role that personal intersubjective communication and learning processes will play in the future:

> It will be from the other side [the wider Irish society] also to understand but that will come [with] the more understanding of Islam because our understanding of Islam, in

[65] Safeerah. Within the interviews, criticisms related to negative media portrayals of Muslims and Islam within Irish and international media were prominent. Notably, academic research on this topic is extensive. See Elisabeth Poole and John E. Richardson, *Muslims and the News Media* (London: I.B Tauris, 2006). Jack G. Shaheen, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (MA: Olive Brach Press, 2009). See also Kim Knott et al., *Media Portrayals of Religion and Secular Sacred* (London: Ashgate, 2013).

[66] Nazir (First Gen; Male; Duel Citizen), 21st of October 2011.

> general, is what the media is talking about the problems, sometimes Muslims here [in Ireland] or there [outside Ireland], have and show the, unfortunately, ugly picture of Islam or [not] any true picture of Islam but I believe that it [the ugly picture of Islam] will be changed [by] these things, especially with the coming generation.[67]

The many forms of societal disrespect expressed by the interviewees may be thematically generalised as related to a lack of acceptance and understanding. This is exemplified by the numerous accounts of societal misconceptions about the Islamic religion and of discrimination that Muslims encounter within their everyday lives. This lack of understanding within Irish society ensures that Muslims are not recognised for "who they are" within their own society – for their traits and abilities – that they bring and which contribute to the value horizon of society as a whole. To counteract this, some of the Muslim interviewees express the view that one-to-one personal communication is the tool through which they can defend "who they are" and correct any misunderstandings and misconceptions. Consistently throughout many of the interviews, the role of the media is referenced as the main medium that maintains and propagates the negative image of Muslims and their religion; thereby, influencing non-Muslim individuals within Irish society to misrecognise Islam and its adherents. Furthermore, the link and overlap between spheres of recognition is present. Such forms of societal misrecognition such as discrimination, which is legitimised and reinforced by negative media portrayals, can detrimentally impact upon a person's individual relation-to-self, family or small community resulting in significant emotional and psychological distress.

[67] Nabeel.

4. A Facilitating Environment as Ethical Goal

The aim of this chapter was to provide a *space* for Sunni Muslim individuals living in Dublin to vocalise subjectively their experiences of misrecognition within four spheres of everyday life. Thus, this research provides a further insight into the perceptions of an understudied religious minority living in a country at the margins of Europe.

In terms of empirical findings, the research shows that family, community and legal recognition are perceived by the majority of interviewees as being fulfilled; however, a minority of interviewees perceive the opposite i.e., that recognition within these three spheres remains unfulfilled and that subtle pathologies of disrespect continue. These forms of misrecognition were generally categorised as being related to a lack of identity approval within the familial sphere; a lack of leadership and support within the community sphere; and a lack of protection within the legal sphere. The most illuminating result showed that the wider societal sphere of everyday life is the intersubjective arena that is perceived by a large majority of interviewees as being recognitively unfulfilled. In terms of the nature of such disrespect, the research exposed perceptions of societal discrimination encountered by Muslims within their everyday lives – from neighbours or the local community, in the workplace or on the public street. These forms of disrespect were generally categorised as being related to a lack of understanding about Muslims and Islam. The analysis also verifies how a significant majority of the interviewees view the media as causally linked to the distortion of Muslim identity within Irish society. Overall, it can be stated that the majority of Sunni Muslims interviewed perceive and feel that they are not recognised fully for "who they are" within the wider Irish social sphere.

In terms of the implications for the theory of recognition, this chapter attempted to show the link and overlap between recognition spheres i.e., that disrespect within one sphere may have a negative impact on other spheres of everyday life. Although this argument was tentative, it may prove to be an arena for further empirical investigation. Whilst this research focused on the level and nature of recognition, through a numerical and narrative analysis, future research should aim to understand how recognitive experiences affect an individual's relation-to-self and how negative emotional feelings create action with moral and transformative intent.

To conclude, an important question must be asked – how can forms of disrespect within various spheres of everyday life be reduced? Social critical theorists have attempted to answer this question by stressing the importance of mutual intersubjective relationships. Similarly, the last quote in this chapter, by Nabeel, re-iterates this crucial point by determining that it will be up to both individuals within the wider Irish society and within various Muslim communities to develop a shared sense of mutual responsibility towards each other in order to come to a better understanding and recognition of each other.

To accomplish this, intersubjective communication is vital; yet its volatility and unpredictability will inevitably lead to further struggles for recognition. What is important however, is whether struggles for recognition within all interactive spheres will be given a degree of respect leading to tolerant consideration. If this *ethical* stance is adopted and people begin to learn about themselves by recognising the normative expectations of others, social justice within each sphere of everyday life will have found firmer ground to take root and grow. Such reflection will give a higher degree of freedom to individuals to self-realise "who

they are" within their own lived experience that is interwoven and traverses a variety of complex intersubjective spheres on a daily basis. In Honneth's opinion, ongoing recognition struggles towards an ethical life will expand the realms of social justice and open up *a space for all* to obtain a higher degree of individual autonomy. [68] The creation of such a *facilitating environment* opens up the potentiality for individuals to self-realise the complex dynamics of their own identities and to tolerate the identities of others.

[68] Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 171-179.

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