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Group Stereotypes 1

Running head: GROUP STEREOTYPES

Do Natives and Non-Natives Differ on the Attributes
That They Select to Describe a Native Person

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Abstract

Participants (62 Native, 58 Non-Native) were approached in various settings and asked to complete a 3 page questionnaire including a semantic differential test, a social distance test and a personal background information. Natives rated Natives significantly more positive on the evaluative dimensions of the semantic differential than did Non-Natives. No other comparisons yielded significant differences.

Are Natives Perceived the same by Natives and Non-Natives

Introduction

Social Psychologists have long been interested in stereotypes and prejudice, these concepts are typically viewed as being very much interrelated. Many classic and contemporary theorists have suggested that prejudice is an inevitable consequence of the categorization (stereotyping) process (Allport, 1954; Devine, 1989). The distinguishing characteristic of a prejudice is that it relies on stereotypes (oversimplified generalizations) about a particular group (Miller, 1982). McCrae, Stangor and Milne (1994) suggests that stereotypes are automatically (or heuristically) applied to members of a stereotyped group. This perspective has serious implications because, as Miller (1982) stated, ethnic attitudes and stereotypes are part of the social heritage of a society and no one can escape learning the prevailing studies and stereotypes assigned to different minority groups. Most Psychologists agree that stereotyping is a generic, universal process.

The present study examined the perception that Native and Non-Native people have about Native people. Prior research has been conducted in Canada and the US on various ethnic minority groups about their self perception (Abate, Berrien, 1967; Karlins, Coffman, Walters, 1969; Ryan, Judd and Park, 1996) there are few studies that have examined other people's perception of Native people (Bell, Esses, 1997) but very few pertaining to how Native people perceive themselves (Bowd, Brady, 1998).

Studies by Brigham (1971) and Miller (1982) have demonstrated that as people we have a strong tendency to divide the social world into distinct categories, these include such things as gender, age, religion etc. we do this to maintain order in our chaotic social environment. Every

day we take in enormous amounts of information and if we didn't have some sort of cognitive categorization process we would be overwhelmed by all this information. This categorization process is a form of cognitive shortcuts or heuristics, a method in which information can be easily accessed (Rothbart, Solomon, Jesen & Howard, 1977). One of the most basic ways in which individuals can categorize individuals is through the use of group labels. Not surprisingly we tend to assign stereotypical traits to particular ethnic group labels.

Tajfel (1969) as cited in Miller (1982) one of the leading researchers on the categorization process has demonstrated that by categorizing people we create labels, labels provide a quick shortcut by which information can be organized and later retrieved from memory. When we identify a person by a group label we get automatic access to the stereotypical traits that go along with that particular label (Brigham, 1971). These group labels become known as "In-group"(us) and "Out-group"(them). Previous studies by Devine (1989) and Brigham(1971), have demonstrated that when we divide people into groups we tend to exaggerate the differences and ignore the similarities. This is what leads to In-group favoritism/bias and Out-group discrimination, many studies has clearly demonstrated this phenomena. In-group members tend to make more flattering or favorable attributions about one's own group, in comparison to other groups. Out-group members are assumed to possess more undesirable traits, this is what leads us to the assumed dissimilarity that holds the view that Out-group members are very different from Ingroup members, even though both may be very much alike(Moghaddam, 1998). A study by Brodwin and Jordan(1975), state that these presumed dissimilarities serve to reinforce negative attitudes towards Out-group members.

When we identify someone by a group label we easily access the traits that go along with that particular label. One downfall to this procedure is that we assume that all members possess those same traits. This can be referred to as overgeneralizing or stereotyping.

Lipman a pioneer of stereotyping studies referred to stereotypes as pictures in the head. McCrae, Stangor and Milne (1994), demonstrated that stereotype activation increases the speed, ease and efficiency of information processing. Once a stereotype is activated, perceiver's gain rapid access to its contents. As labor saving cognitive devices stereotypes, when activated limit the demands information processing imposed upon perceiver's finite resource capacity. Miller (1982), stated that the more a stereotype is activated the more ingrained it can become, and that changes are not easily made. McCauley, Stitt and Segal (1980), have suggested that people reaffirm their own beliefs by using the self-fulfilling prophecy, this occurs when we expect a person to behave a certain way, we may actually induce a particular behavior which in turn reaffirms our original thought.

In summary, the present research suggests that a groups membership activates, or primes, the stereotype in the perceiver's memory, I would like to find out whether Natives and Non-Natives differ on the attributes that they select to describe a native person. A negative stereotype is associated with Native people it will be interesting to see wether or not this will be portrayed by both Natives and Non-Natives. Previous research indicates that when asking a particular group to rate themselves they tend to show In-group favoritism and rate themselves in a positive manner (Miller, 1982; Ryan, Judd & park 1996).

Method

Subjects

120 male and female subjects (62 Native, 58 Non-Native) were randomly approached in various settings , the mean average of age was 34.

Materials

A 3 page questionnaire including a semantic differential test, a social distance test and a personal background information.

Procedure

Instructions were in English and illustrated on the first page as well as on the top of each test page. Subjects were instructed to place the completed questionnaire into a sealed envelope, they were assured of complete anonymity, and were not asked to identify themselves. Subjects received the semantic differential test that instructed them to rate the concept “North American Indian” against a series of twenty scales that consisted of forty polar adjectives on a seven point descriptive scale. Next subjects completed a social distance test , they were asked to rate five groups (White, Black, Native, Oriental, Hispanic) along seven different social contacts. Personal background information consisted of age, gender, education, ethnic identity and income. The questionnaire took an average of 5 minutes to complete.

Expected Results and Discussion

I would expect Native people to view themselves in a positive manner. Previous research has demonstrated that Ingroup members tend to give themselves more favorable attributes, they tend to show the Ingroup bias (Weber, 1971; Brigham, 1971; Baron & Byrne, 1997). I would expect to find that the Non-Natives may view Native people in a negative manner in accordance to the negative stereotype that exists, or they may not indicate a negative perception, this could be due to the social desirability theory (McCauley, Stitt & Segal, 1980; Moghaddam, 1998; Sigall, Page 1971).

Results

The statistical analysis of the Semantic differential test revealed a significant main effect with ethnic identity (Native & Non-Native) on scales 1, 2 & 3.

Insert Figure 1

Scale 1 $F_{calc}9.72 > F_{crit}3.92$ $p(0.002)$

Scale 2 $F_{calc}6.72 > F_{crit}3.92$ $p(0.011)$

Scale 3 $F_{calc}10.76 > F_{crit}3.92$ $p(0.001)$

On all 3 evaluative dimensions, Native people rated themselves in a positive manner, especially

on the Good/Bad scale, scores were mostly in the 6 & 7 range on this 7 point scale. Non-Native's tended to stay in the neutral area 4 & 5 on the 7 point scale on all 3 evaluative dimensions, this could be interpreted as not wanting to express a negative perception (social desirability effect).

Insert Figure 2

A comparison on age, gender, education and level of income had no significant effect.

The social distance test was discarded because of improper instructions. Subjects seemed to check every column regardless of group label, I would suspect that most did not want to display any kind of a negative impression, or they may have been in a hurry to fill out the questionnaire and failed to carefully read all of the instructions.

General Discussion

The primary purpose of this research was to assess whether or not Natives and Non-Natives differed on the attributes that they selected to describe a native person. As expected Native people tended to rate themselves in a more positive manner in comparison to Non-Natives on all 3 evaluative dimensions of the Semantic Differential scales. The seven point scale is a good measure to use to find out the intensity of a rating, unless there is a forced choice people may select only neutral answers. Further research in the area of Native stereotypes is needed to help alleviate the negative stereotype that pertains to this group.

Figure 1. Scales 1, 2 &3 for the Semantic Differential Test

The following 10 items make up the GOOD/BAD scale:

- 1 worthless-valuable
- 2 sour-sweet
- 4 dirty-clean
- 6 distasteful-tasteful
- 9 good-bad
- 10 disreputable-reputable
- 13 careless-careful
- 15 ugly-beautiful
- 16 unpleasant-pleasant
- 18 cruel-kind

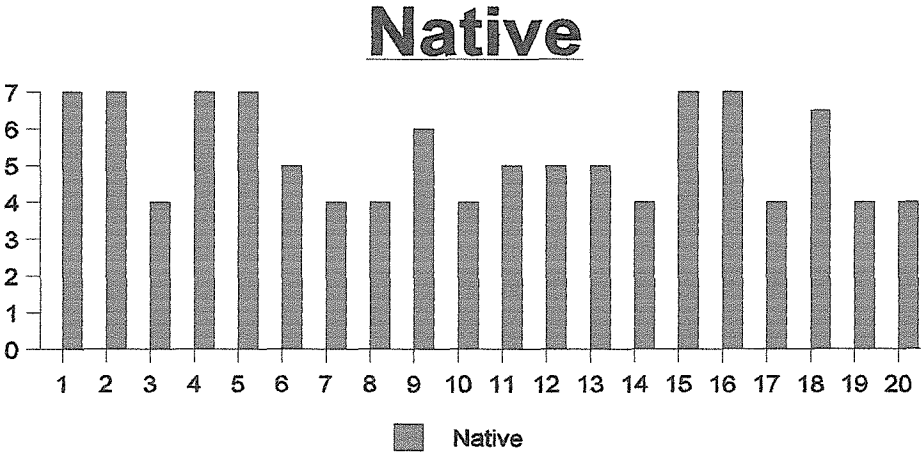
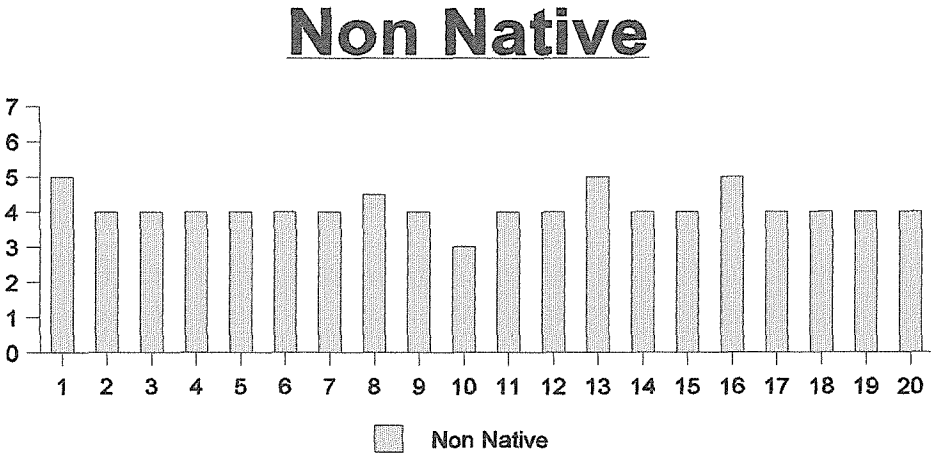
The following 5 items make up the ACTIVE/PASSIVE scale:

- 3 slow-fast
- 7 cold-hot
- 12 thick-thin
- 19 passive-active
- 20 subdued-flashy

The following 5 items make up the POTENT/IMPOTENT scale:

- 5 weak-strong
- 8 small-large
- 11 dull-sharp
- 14 light-heavy
- 17 narrow-broad

Figure 2



Abstract

Studies on stereotype formation suggests that we organize and integrate available information about a person into an overall impression within seconds, this is a generic and universal process. A stereotype can be automatically activated by the presence of a member of a particular group. We tend to assume that all members of a particular group possess the same characteristics. Previous research has stated that by dividing people into groups we create labels, these labels are a form of our social categorization categorization, we use a categorization process to maintain order in our daily lives.

Literature Review

The term “minority group” was originally derived from the European experience, (Simpson and Yinger, 1965) defined a minority as a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination. The existence of a minority in a society implies the existence of a corresponding dominant group with higher social status and greater privileges. Macionis, Clarke and Gerber (1994) stated that visible minorities have two major characteristics. First they share a distinctive identity, because race is so highly visible and virtually impossible to change. Visible minorities are usually equally aware of the physical characteristics that distinguish them from the majority. A second characteristic of minorities is subordination, a minority group as a whole may be disadvantaged, although this is not true for all members.

Canada is a mosaic of different ethnic groups, however, they are not all equal in power, prestige, or presumed worth (Frideres, 1998). One group may be alleged to be superior to another because of the differential power-power derived from superior numbers, technology, property, and (or) economic resources. Those holding superior power in a society establish a system of inequality by dominating less powerful groups, and this system of inequality is then maintained and perpetuated by power (Miller, 1982). Minority groups are usually target of prejudice and discrimination. According to Baron and Byrne (1997) prejudice is an attitude,

usually negative, toward the members of some group, based solely on their membership in that group. In other words a person is evaluated not by their individual qualities that they may possess but instead by the presumed qualities ascribed to a target group.

The forms of prejudice may range from a relatively unconscious aversion to a comprehensive, well articulated, and coherent ideology (Brodwin, Jordan, 1975). Prejudice in turn leads to discrimination which is an actual behavior that is directed at other people on the basis of their category memberships. Social psychologists often make the distinction between prejudice and discrimination in the following manner: prejudice is viewed as an attitude with emotional and cognitive components and discrimination as a behavior, or action resulting from prejudice (Miller, 1982). Information that is consistent with prejudiced views often receives more attention, is rehearsed more frequently, and as a result tends to be remembered more accurately than information that is not consistent with these views (Allport, 1958; Devine, 1989; & Baron, Byrne, 1997). Prejudice may also involve beliefs and expectations about members of target groups, specifically, stereotypes suggesting that all members of these groups demonstrate certain characteristics and behave in certain ways (Anderson, Frideres, 1981).

Society divides people into groups this is a form of categorization. Many different studies have suggested that as people we divide the social world into distinct categories such as gender, age, race, religion etc. (Nelson, Ackerman and Manis, 1996) we do this to maintain order in our daily lives. Every day we take in enormous amounts of information and if we didn't have some sort of cognitive categorization process we would be overwhelmed by all of this information. Labels are attached to different ethnic groups to impose order in a chaotic social environment, and we use categorical labels to divide the social world into intelligible units. Anderson and

Frideres (1981) referred to the process of categorization as a grouping phenomena which enables us to be able to deal with vast amounts of information. Tajfel as cited in Miller (1982) was one of the leading researchers on the categorization process, his research has demonstrated that by placing people in minimal groups creates the titles "us" and "them", this leads to in-group favoritism and out-group discrimination. Out-group members are assumed to possess more undesirable traits, this leads to the assumed dissimilarity that holds the view that out-group members are very different from in-group members (Weber, 1971) even though both are very much alike. When we divide people into groups we tend to exaggerate the differences between them and us and we tend to ignore the similarities (Brigham, 1971). When we assign an individual to a group label we tend to overlook his or her individuality and perceive the group characteristics more saliently. When we identify someone by a group label we easily access the traits that go along with that particular label. Through labelling people society began the process of stereotyping and racial prejudice. Labels are usually (most often) associated with a negative meaning. One downfall to this procedure is that we assume that all members possess the same traits, this can be referred to as overgeneralizing or stereotyping.

As Hamilton (1981) stated that stereotypes can be defined as a preconceived idea about some group of people, an image that is generally oversimplified, rigid and frequently, although not always, uncomplimentary. Stereotypes are a generic and universal process. Walter Lippman a pioneer of stereotype studies referred to a stereotypes as pictures in the head. He introduced the original "stereotype" which he referred to as a printing process by which you could save time and energy by making a cast or a mold. The mold process saves time and energy, but of course, you could not easily make changes to it. Studies have suggested that people often use a similar

mechanism in dealing with people, that we carry a mold or picture in our head to represent a particular group (Rothbart, Solomon, Jesen and Howard, 1977). Devine (1989) and Baron & Byrne (1997) stated that when we meet a person who fits a stereotype mold, we categorize them as a member of a target group. We pour the formless information about that person into our mold and we perceive them as a category and not an individual. Our first impression of a person is based on snap judgements that are based on very limited information during an initial contact (Raven and Rubin 1976). Even though the encounter is instantaneous and of brief duration, we in that instant go through an elaborate process of interpretation and organization of that other person's characteristics. The impact of a single attribute enables us to assimilate information about an individual in such a way that it fits the impression we have formed. (Rothbart et al.) Research by Miller (1982) and Brigham (1971) has demonstrated that once a stereotype is activated, traits that are associated with the target group, come readily to mind. Information that is relevant to an activated stereotype is processed more quickly than information unrelated to it. Activated stereotypes allow us to make quick judgements about others without engaging in complex mental thought.

Unfortunately, stereotypes lead persons holding them to pay attention to specific types of information, usually information consistent with the stereotypes, and ignore other relevant information (Devine, 1989). Moghaddam (1998) stated that the cognitive process of a stereotype is an automatic process, and that this process is involuntary and inevitable occurs in certain contexts. This suggests that attitudes could be primed and activated through automatic processes without a person making an intentional effort or being conscious of this process. A target group's membership activates or primes the stereotype in the perceiver's memory, making

other traits or attributes associated with the stereotype highly accessible for future processing (Devine, 1989). The implications of this automatic stereotype activation may be damaging, particularly, when the content of the stereotype is predominately negative, as is the case with racial stereotypes. Lang and Ponting (1992) found that a certain act can elicit different meanings depending on who is judging it. In this study, Lang and Pont used a Black and White actor, when the Black actor shoved the white actor and subjects were asked for their response as to what they viewed. In most instances the shove would be viewed as being hostile or violent when conducted by the Black actor and as playing around when the White actor shoved the Black actor. Lang assumed that the presence of the Black actor automatically primed the negative stereotype of Blacks in which violence has been associated.

Recent study by Hewstone , Macrae and Milne (1994) indicate that when individuals encounter persons who behave in ways contrary to stereotypes they hold, they often perceive these persons as a new “subtype” rather than change their stereotype. Various research has demonstrated that once a stereotype is well established, it is very hard to alter. When information inconsistent with stereotype does manage to enter consciousness, it may be actively refuted or even simply denied (Nelson, Acker, Manis, 1996). As stated earlier, it is easier to perceive a person as a new “subtype” rather than change their stereotype . A study by Ryan, Judd & Park (1996) found that if you subjected a prejudiced individual with a minority member with whom they are prejudiced, that over time the attitude towards the minority member changed to a more positive version. This positive attitude was held only towards the individual and not towards the rest of their group. This study suggests that a negative group stereotype is hard to change, (Karlins, Coffman & Walters,1969) study suggest that a negative group

stereotype can become more positive over a long period of time. The American's ideas about the Germans and Japanese changed for the worse between 1933 and 1950, while their willingness to express stereotypes had declined in the 1970's.

Some Social Psychologist have suggested that people who hold a strong stereotype towards a particular group(s), may actually interject an expectancy effect on the group in question (McCaully, Stitt, & Segal, 1980) This process would be that when we expect a person to behave in a certain way we may actually induce a certain behavior that may reaffirm our own belief.

An example : if a person thought that all Native people were unfriendly, and happened to encounter a Native person, the person holding the belief may do something either directly or indirectly towards the Native person, this may induce a negative reaction from the Native person, and this will re-affirm the person holding the belief.

According to Baron & Bryne (1997) stereotypes serve several different functions for those who hold them, "stereotyping reduces the overwhelming complexity of information to manageable proportions , it is a form of social shorthand"(Watson, 1973, p. 84). The convenience of a stereotype is typically acquired at a terrible cost it strips peoples of their individuality.

The affective consequences of being a target of a negative stereotype was investigated in a study by Dion and Earn (1975) they suggested that when discriminated against by members of a majority group, a minority group members senses their power disadvantage and is aware of stereotypical trait differences presumed to exist between the two groups. As a result, the target of prejudice may perceive his group's stereotype to be the cause of his difficulties and respond defensively with a self-presentation that denies the stereotype by which he believes he is being labelled and discriminated against. "In describing himself, he may emphasize traits opposed to

the stereotype of his membership group, alternatively, he may exhibit counter stereotype behaviour (Brodwin & Jordan 1975).

Other studies have investigated the defence self-presentation hypothesis and have found that on occasion a minority member will contradict the majority group's stereotype of his target group. Subjects in this condition evaluate themselves more favourably on negative, stereotypic dimensions, (Dion & Earn, 1975).

In a study regarding the preferred use of ethnic identity labels by Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal Canadians, Native respondents rated Native uniformly more positively regardless of ethnic identity labels, and described their own ethnic heritage most often using tribal terms rather than identity labels employed by Non-Natives.

Bell and Esses (1997), ambivalence toward a stigmatized group in society can lead to polarized or amplified responses by activating positive and negative dimensions of a stereotype.

Conflicting attitudes happen when you evoke negative feelings and feelings of sympathy towards a target (stereotyped) group and a threat of self esteem is created from this emotional tension.

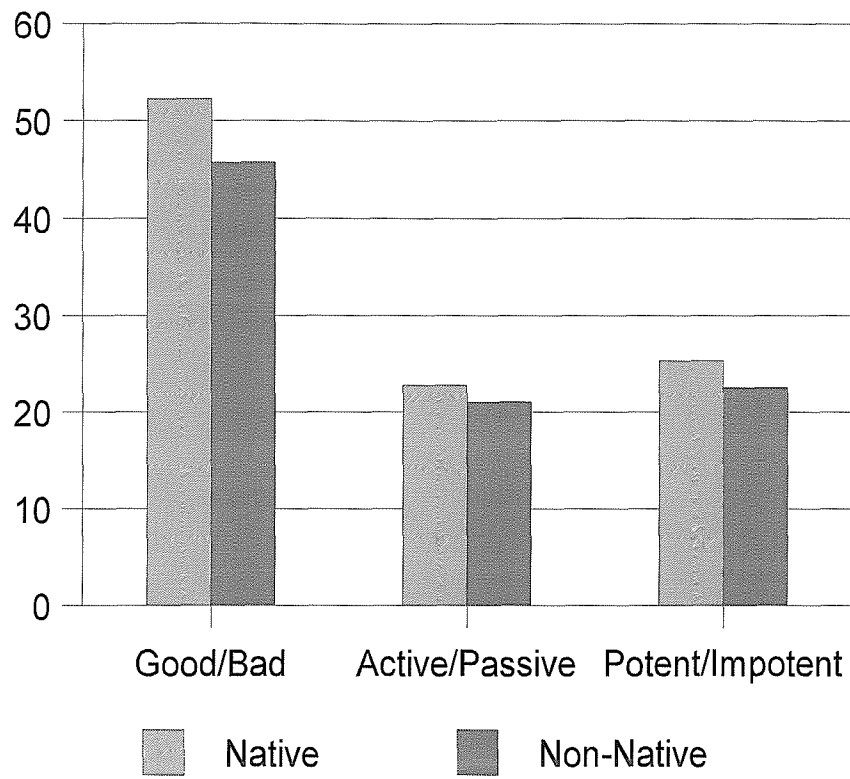
Studies have determined that this threat to self-esteem occurs because people see themselves as discerning yet humane in their treatment of others. The sympathetic feelings towards a target group threatens the discerning part of people's self-image, which mandates feelings of sympathy towards those who merit it. Aversive feelings towards a target group less fortunate than themselves threatens the humane part of a person's self image in which they view themselves as unprejudiced (Devine, 1989). "Threat reduction thus occurs by denying or defending the dimension that has been discredited by the actions of the stigmatized group. This behaviour is called response amplification" (Cook, 1979). Individuals in a group with a negative stereotype

tend to report higher levels of discrimination against their group(s) as a whole than against themselves as an individual, one interpretation may be that this is because of denial, perhaps motivated by a need to maintain one's self-esteem (Macionis, Clarke & Gerber, 1994)

Prejudice against minorities is a major societal problem, even if it is not expressed openly or directly, most prejudiced people are more likely to discriminate against particular groups when opportunities arise. People learn to present themselves according to new norms and rules and they regulate their behavior accordingly. Research has shown that when people were tested on their attitudes towards a particular minority group they were more apt to express positive attitudes towards the minority group in question unless indirect methods were used. In a study by Sigall and Page (1971) subjects were asked to indicate how characteristic certain adjectives were for particular groups, subjects responded favorably when they were not hooked up to the bogus pipeline machine which was like a lie detector test. Subjects were told that this machine would be able to detect any misconceptions. This study clearly demonstrates that unless an individual is forced to be honest, they may use the social desirability defence in which they appear to give a favourable rating to a group, other studies have replicated these results. By using indirect methods to measure a person's attitude it is likely that negative racial stereotypes may not be revealed if the person in question is holding them.

Figure 1

Semantic Differential



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