



RESEARCH PAPER

**“The Others” Lexical and Textual Representation (Bias) of
Refugees: A Critical Discourse Analysis of American and
Pakistani Press**

Saima Khan¹ Hafiz Bilal Ahsan² Muhammad Tariq^{*3}

1. M. Phil Mass Communication, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. MS Film & TV, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Ph. D. Scholar, Department of Mass Communication, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan

PAPER INFO

Received:

February 17, 2021

Accepted:

May 01, 2021

Online:

May 15, 2021

Keywords:

CDA,
lexical,
Media.
Others,
Refugees

***Corresponding**

Author

xpertyz@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Refugees are among the most vulnerable humans in the world. Their representation in media creates particular perception among the masses. This research aims to analyze media discourse of Pakistani and American newspapers regarding refugees. For this purpose Fairclough’s 3D model of CDA has been applied. CDA focuses on language manipulation to maintain power and propagation of hidden ideologies in text through media. To explore the lexical and textual othering of refugees it has been found that the media discourses of the given newspapers tend to mold ideologies using language as a tool. It renders unknown people (refugees) crossing border to take refuge in the host countries as outsiders. The findings of the CDA reveal that textual representation of refugees in the defined media represents them as “the others”, unwanted foreigners who are not welcome into the host countries.

Introduction

This study intends to focus on Pakistani (Dawn and The News) and American (The New York Times and The Washington Post) newspapers to analyze the representation of refugees during one year i.e. May 2017 to April 2018. .

The large inflow of refugees has strongly affected the host countries in all aspects. Financial pressures and distress over national security and cultural adjustments have caused the formation and endorsement of anti-immigrant bodies and campaigns in the various countries of Europe for example Greece, France and some of the Scandinavian states. (Berry, Blanco, & Moore, 2015).

The problems are being faced by refugees are numerous. Families have to face multiple cultural and resettlement hurdles as they seek refuge in host countries.

These obscurities may be reinforced by trauma of the past and exposure to violence causing enlarged risk for psychological well-being. Better familiarity to the knowledge is required regarding defensive practices playing key role in positive growth and adjustment in new environment (Abdi, 2015).

War in Syria has caused huge human suffering and led considerable number of people to escape their homeland leading to global media attention. Moreover this very conflict has made Palestinian refugees to experience the suffering of fleeing once again for Syria was their shelter since the Arab-Israel war 1949 and 1967 (Elsamni, 2016).

The Australian government has hostile attitude towards refugees. Government built strong impression of fear among masses, both locally and internationally, to justify their ignorant policies towards refugees and immigrants. They treated them as "others". "Technologizing" discourse to stabilize the government's strict policies regarding refugees by objectifying the subjective and converting a humanitarian issue into technical issues in news and media content (Mckenna & Waddell, 2006).

Literature Review

Media reports which involve alarming discourses keep the issue of refugees as a negatively perceived problem among the masses of people. For instance Metaphors like "flood", "tides" and "waves" used in the by journalists to represent Tunisian refugees and asylum seeker dropping by boats on the seaboard of Italy is a way to keep them out of the border. This language promoted dehumanization of refugees representing a mass population and greatest humanitarian crisis. Moreover the undesirable language used by politician for refugees have also same impact (Wright, 2001).

Similarly those refugees who make it to European shores face a cruel reality. They have to struggle for the minimal resources and services allocated for them. Worse than that they face racism, Islamophobia and xenophobia (Farasin, 2017).

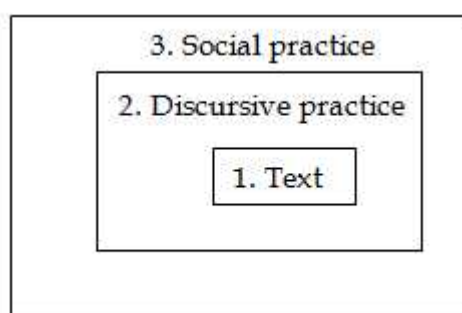
Likewise a study on Afghan refugees revealed long term refugee crisis is perceived as a threat to human security. Global political and economic interest encouraged the security dilemma and to hold refugees only responsible ones is unfair (Schmeidl, 2002).

Similarly asylum seekers were considered as "*theothers*" and "*folkevil*" in UK based tabloids. They were depicted as "*bogus asylum seekers*", ethnic and economic threats to UK, promoting terrorism etc. Articles published in *Sun* suggested that the government policies are lenient towards immigrants with least concern for locals. The policies should be tighten for refugees. It also suggested that UK is too small to handle such masses of "*frauds*" who just want to enjoy living in UK at the cost of local taxpayers (Matthews & Brown, 2012).

Most recently refugee crisis is the largest human suffering and media has its role to play in this regard. A study reported that media plays an undeniable role to strengthen perceptions by framing partial image of refugees and immigrants. More crises more news and a positive story is least sold. Thus media projects biased and uncertain image of the refugees to sell their stories. It leads towards an extreme response of the public resulting in dehumanization of the arrivals who have already fled from a war and human right violations. The media portrayals which depict these groups as threat, terrorists, illegal and foreign invaders are parallel to their dehumanization i.e. depriving them to be treated as human (Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013).

Material and Methods

Fairclough's 3D model of Critical Discourse Analysis has been used as the research method. Norman Fairclough's three dimensional model of critical discourse analysis deals with analysis of text at levels;



Analysis at Text Level

It is the analysis based on the object of analysis; a text can be written, visual or spoken words.

Discursive Practice

This level of analysis involves the production and reception of the text i.e. writing/reading, speaking/listening, and showing/viewing by the social members.

Social Practice

Analysis based on the norms, values and other standards prevalent in the society.

Criticism emerges as media studies focus more on the reception of text than the analysis of the text. In such situations CDA can assist to investigate text into its social and cultural aspects. Besides CDA also attempts to interpret, expose and resist social disparity (Sheikh, Ali, & Shaheen, 2018).

In this research use of language, words, phrases, adjectives and metaphors like outsider, foreigners, masses, sneak in, dream destination, illegal migrants, hundreds, dozens, get rid of, should be kept outside etc. render refugees as "others" in the media rhetoric of the selected newspapers.

Results and Discussion

Pakistani Newspapers

Dawn

Rohingya refugees have been referred as "*illegal*" in India.

"India in talks with Myanmar, Bangladesh to deport 40,000 Rohingya"

In the headline use of "*deport*" also strengthens the notion of othering. It refers to the concept that Rohingya are "*unwanted*" in India they entered to seek refuge from the dangers of genocide back home. India is not signatory to the UNHCR and does not accept any refugees to share the burden of global refugee crisis. Their representation in numbers also mentions them as outlandish to host society. Moreover here Indian stance on Rohingya refugees is also reflected. Myanmar, a place of persecution for Rohingya, and Bangladesh, their largest host, are being stressed by Indian government to take them back. In Myanmar life threats are looming and in Bangladesh poor and overcrowded refugee camps have been waiting for them.

Another encouragement of the othering of refugees "*foreign nationals*" and establishment of "*task forces*" to expatriate them. The news was concluded that they are "*reviled*" and "*hated*" in densely populated host country (India) where there is already a considerable competition for the accommodations and career opportunities as well as anti-Islamist attitudes are also against their existence of "*others*" in the country. Representing the nationals as the only deserving for country's opportunities supported lexical othering for the refugees.

Discourses like "*stranded*", "*barred*", "*blocking their entry*", "*not to let them cross*" and "*and let them in*" depicts that refugees were deprived to cross the border and take refuge in Bangladesh. They were taken as outsiders and were kept outside despite ongoing heavy gunfire and burning of their homes.

Another news revealed that inflow of Syrian refugees has triggered many troubles in neighboring Lebanon and put pressure on the Lebanese authorities to persuade the Syrian official for their return despite least security in the war prone country.

"The influx has put a strain on water and electrical infrastructure".

Here the rhetorical othering of refugees was portrayed that due to arrival of outsiders, the country's infrastructure is threatened. Provision of basic accommodation became troublesome to large number intruders in the country. *"Ramped up calls"* refers to the increased efforts by the Lebanese officials to deport the Syrian refugees as soon as possible. *"Hundreds of"* and *"bussed back"* refers to the masses of refugees entered Lebanon from Syria to avoid war were sent back to the Syrian territory under an agreement with the Syrian officials. The rhetoric used for their return also portrayed them as *"others"* in the host Lebanon. Moreover *"transport refugees out"* also refers to the lexical othering for the refugees which needs to be pushed out or sent back home rapidly from the country of refuge. Lebanon, a key host for prolonged Palestinian refugees, was stressed when huge number of Syrian refugees entered. The situation became grave as the authorities believed that country's is lacking financially to support more refugees.

An account from the editorial *"Bangladesh may want all refugees to leave within two years"* narrative positions refugees as outsiders and must leave as soon as possible. Bangladesh being a poor country has been hosting large number Rohingya refugees with world's largest refugee camp in Cox Bazaar. Country's economy has been burdened thus demanding a repatriation of refugees without any delay.

Use of *"Illegal aliens"* by Attorney General of Trump administration for the refugees entering into US supports their othering. Moreover use of term *"Dreamers"* also refers to the othering for refugees. It reflected Trump's strict policy towards refugees and migrants. He believed that these people are not in need of refuge instead intentionally enters US so that they can settle there and have good future.

A relevant news portrayed refugees as *"migrants"* the outlandish individuals in Europe.

"accuses NGOs of smuggling hundreds of thousands of illegal migrants to Europe, endangering the security and future of our continent and vows to "do something against it"

An anti-migrant organization *"Defend Europe Alliance"* have been referred here. Refugees were represented like *"hundreds' "thousands" "illegal migrants"* depicting general conception of refugees in Europe. In European societies people are very concerned about prosperity they enjoy and they think arrival of outsiders in masses may compromise peace and security of the region. Use of *"smuggling"* refers to undermining legal ways by refugees to enter Europe. The humanitarian organizations i.e. NGOs have been referred as source of smuggling unwanted people into the Europe. Use of *"Our continent"* stresses textual othering of refugees. It reflects that Europeans believe that Europe belongs to the Europeans only and outsider (refugees/immigrants) are *"other"* people. There is xenophobic element prevalent as well. European are afraid to share their place with refugees as they may steal opportunities and facilities meant only for Europeans. *"To do something against it"* refers to the steps needed to be taken to halt the arrival of migrants into Europe.

"Afghans were counted alongside Pakistanis in census"

Headline shows statement of chief census commissioner that Afghan refugees are outsiders in Pakistan and should not be the part of total population of the country. It reveals that in national census of 2017 Afghan refugees were also included. The rhetoric shows that Afghan refugees were to be considered as non-locals in the final report of census strengthening their othering. *"Live among Pakistani citizens"* also refers that perceived outsiders Afghan refugees lives as the Pakistani national with equal rights instead of living in refugee camps.

The News

Afghan refugees were wanted to leave Pakistan without any further delay. The notion *"ensuring their early repatriation"* mentioned the petition in Peshawar High Court by a senior lawyer and former deputy attorney general, requested court to direct federal government to ensure timely departure of Afghan refugees from Pakistan. *"Ban the free movement of Afghan refugees in cities across the province"* the notion was part of the petition. This discourse placed Afghan refugees as foreigners with limited scope allowed in local communities. Further the expressions like *"close down all businesses conducted by Afghan refugees... ban on sale and purchase of properties owned by them."* The notion also encouraged the lexical othering of refugees. It reflects socially and legally Afghan refugees are considered non-locals with no right to do business or own any property in Pakistan.

The discourse *"identify and deport the Rohingya"* referred to narrative of Indian Home Minister that government had ordered relevant authorities to detect Rohingya who were living *"illegally"* in India deport to Myanmar. *"Which does not recognize them as refugees"* the notion referred to the Indian policy regarding refugees. India is not signatory to UNHCR consequently does not recognize Rohingya as refugees and considers them illegal migrants in India.

For example the Prime Minister of Bangladesh who called refugees *"big burden for Bangladesh"* renders the perception of refugees as economic and social strain for Bangladesh. The rhetoric shows that refugees are taken as outsiders and problematic for the host country.

Unwanted Rohingya face threats in India, Nepal"

Similarly headline positioned Rohingya refugees as *"unwanted"* meaning both India and Nepal do not allow Rohingya refugees in their premises. Both Hindu Majority countries have anti-refugees policy and does not support outflow of Rohingya from neighboring Myanmar. A similar notion is also supported by use of *"will get a reminder how unloved they are in India too"*. Hated in homeland Rohingya were refused in India as well. Rohingya refugees sheltered in Occupied Jammu were forced to leave by Hindu mobs and forced to live in open.

"They won't be able to say 'this is my home, this is my country'"

The news discourse of the given example depicted the narrative of a Rohingya refugee in India referring to their children who have born in "slumps" there, despite their birth place they will never be called its citizens because they are refugees will never be given citizenship. "This is a foreign land for us" referred to the refugees who long for return to home due to hostilities in host countries. They have realized that they will never be treated as equal citizens to avail basic rights.

"Rohingya Muslims must go home: Bangladesh"

The headline depicted that Bangladesh wanted to move Rohingya refugees out of its premises as soon as possible. Likewise "burden had become "untenable" on its territory" referred to the stance of UN ambassador of Bangladesh who called Myanmar government to take its nationals back home as huge number in Bangladesh had become unbearable burden. Socio-economic and political system demands return of refugees back home.

"Herded into long-term camps"

The news discourse referred to the reception camps planned to be constructed by Myanmar government for the returnees Rohingya refugees. The rhetoric "herded" was used as a metaphor of sent, strengthening a strong lexical othering of Rohingya refugees. Without any proper planning and investment forced by the International communities' Myanmar agrees to the repatriation of Rohingya but no high expectation in sight.

"The new US government is actively xenophobic"

Referring to the Trump's travel ban, and enhanced restrictions in immigration policies, it portrayed that US government doesn't want any refugees. Trump administration with xenophobic approach perceived foreigner (refugees) as "threat" to the prosperity and security of USA.

"We won't allow mass infiltration into Israel"

It mentioned the narrative of chief of armed forces in Israel referring to six-week long protest by Palestinian refugees in Gaza entitled "The Great March of Return" demanding their right to return home from where they were expelled 70 years ago during the formation of Israel. Now Israel doesn't allow Palestinian refugees to return Palestine their homeland.

American Newspapers

The New York Times

The textual accounts like *"xenophobia"* and *"turn away"* depicts textual othering of refugees as it refers they are unwanted in America and Europe.

Media discourse strengthened lexical othering of the refugees referring to the travel ban of United States. The narrative used *"banning entry into the United States by refugees from around the world"* depicted that anti-refugee policy of Super power America considering them alien to the host country. Moreover *"bar many of them from finding safety in the United States"* also refers to the notion that refugees are unwanted in US and are obstructed their entry with the implementation of a travel ban. The imposition of travel ban by Trump administration altered the response to refugees negatively. Similarly referring to the travel ban imposed by Trump administration, using *"controlling flow of refugees"*, *"cap refugee admissions"* to refer the Trump's policy to halt refugee flow into USA. Likewise *"shutting the country's doors to people from Iran, Syria, Somalia, Libya and Yemen"* also portrayed that banning countries with masses of refugees fleeing humanitarian crimes and persecution is tantamount to lexical othering of the refugees. Trump administration imposed travel restrictions on the six Muslim majority countries with massive outflow of refugees to save its prosperity and security.

Narratives like *"turn migrants away"*, *"discourage people from leaving"* refers to discourage further outflow of refugees from their homelands saving Europe from trouble of hosting them. Further the narrative like *"patience is wearing thin"* referred to the opinion of the Italian officials that Italy has shown huge tolerance towards refugees now tolerance has reached its limits. Another narrative *"too much of the burden"* also portray refugees as others/outsideers bringing problems into the host country. Mass entry of refugees into Europe caused anti-refugee stance in European societies. Since Europe is most preferred destination by most of the displaced people around the world, European officials have started to impose restriction to halt inflow of refugees to cope with socio-economic strains.

Similarly refugees were portrayed as others by using *"hundreds"*, *"dozens of Rohingya"*, for the Rohingya refugees in the camps of Bangladesh. Moreover *"Syrian war's refugee tide"* referred that number of Rohingya refugees have exceeded Syrian refugees. Moreover *"government did not plan to give refugee status"* portrayed that with the increase in the number of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh authorities refused to consider them as refugees. One of the donors addressed refugees as brothers and sisters however the narrative *"But maybe not forever"* referred that he opined that they would not be thought so for long time one day they have to go back home. The notion reflected that refugees are not welcome for much longer period in the host countries they are wanted to leave as soon as possible.

Similarly another news mentioned *"reluctant to give it"* referring to the refusal of Bangladesh to give a woman refugee status as she lacked any documented prove to be citizen of Myanmar as she fled after immense threats of persecution. In Myanmar where houses were burned and Rohingya were persecuted indiscriminately, the possibility keep documental prove of citizenship is zero.

Therefore depriving such people of refugee status as, defined under UNHCR mandate, supports lexical othering of refugees.

Additionally use of *"Flooded into Bangladesh"* referred to the Rohingya refugees fled from life threats and other human rights violations. Moreover Rohingya refugees are unwanted in their homeland too *"prove that they had lived in Myanmar"* mentions that Myanmar authorities would repatriate only those Rohingya refugees with documented proof of been lived in Myanmar before fleeing to Bangladesh undermining the circumstances in which they hardly could save their lives. Moreover fact the most of them never had any documental evidence of citizenship. In Myanmar Rohingya are not identified as citizens rather considered as *"illegal immigrants from Bangladesh"* who have occupied good lands in the country. Thus a strong *"othering"* for Rohingya refugees is prevalent in this context.

"Enhanced vetting capabilities" referred to refugees trying to seek refuge in United States are outsiders and must go through strict tests and screening procedures to proof their eligibility to enter USA. Trump introduced certain restrictions to be prove a refugee status keeping them out of US premises. Different backgrounds checks of the refugees prolonged their miseries and described that refugees are considered as security threats to USA supporting textual othering.

"That feeds into the adjacent ... refugee camp"

The narrative was used for Palestinian refugees in refugee camps in Lebanon. It positioned Palestinian refugees as outsider who depends on other country for food and survival. Moreover rhetoric *"exile in Lebanon"* portrayed Palestinian refugees as outsiders who have been forcefully displaced to take refuge in other country. Similarly *"tired of life as a Palestinian in Lebanon"* also supported the notion that being a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon is more likely to live like a foreigners with no rights that locals enjoy. Palestinian refugees have been living in Lebanon for decades but Lebanese law doesn't grant them citizenship or life out of the refugee camps. They are expected to leave one day.

"Mia's death as a rallying cry for hatred against foreigners"

The notion has the context of the murder of German teenage girl by her ex-boyfriend an Afghan refugee. The incident provoked debates at different platforms regarding refugees and migrants. *"How many others will betray our hospitality"* opined a German woman condemning the crimes by the refugee. It referred when outsiders/refugees are welcomed in response they exploit their hosts. *"Germans feel neglected"* also strengthened the othering of the refugees as attention is given to the non-locals and foreigners who enter Germany to take refuge but brings security threats for locals. It is stance of German society that government protects refugees and locals have become second priority. *"I wouldn't mind our politicians to do a bit of 'Germany First'"* another opinion of a German after the incident showed that German nationals should be top priority of any political agenda and non-locals i.e. refugees

should come after that. An anti-refugee stance is prevailing again in the news discourse.

Similarly referring to the Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA responsible for Palestinian refugees displaced from their homes during the formation of Israel in 1948 and Arab-Israel war in 1967. *"Reliably puts food in their mouths"* the news discourse showed that Palestinian refugees are dependent creatures. They are depicted as unable to feed themselves. They are fed by the agency. UNRWA aid agency feeds them which is further dependent on aids. Palestinian refugees have been portrayed as dependent and burden for the host and the UN.

Likewise *"They were not wanted"* depicted that constant eviction of Syrian refugees from Lebanon. The narrative of a Syrian refugee, forced to relocate his campsite three times, revealed prevalent bias against them. When he reported to officials was responded; *"go back to Syria"*. They are uninvited in Lebanon. Similarly *"country has been strained under the weight of the refugees"* reflects the stance of the most Lebanese politicians that Syrian refugees have burdened their country, with already Palestinian refugees registered under UNRWA. *"It was time for refugees to return home"* stated by the Lebanese Foreign Minister despite the vulnerable security conditions in Syria they are demanded to leave. The rhetoric like *"throwing out Syrians"* also portrayed Syrian refugees as others in the host Lebanon. The language choice for refugees reflects them as *"others"*.

The Washington Post

"In his dehumanization of migrants and refugees"

The given example mentions that Trump with his travel ban wanted to keep refugees out of the country. It is inhumane and immoral to halt the arrival of refugees to a safe place as granted them under UN mandate. Travel restriction imposed by Trump resulted in dehumanization and othering of refugees. His policies for the foreigners especially Muslims posed a reduced the role of US in humanitarian crisis. Socio-economic and security wellbeing has been used to check entry of refugees fleeing from persecution.

"U.S. efforts to help refugees in particular would be jeopardized"

Similarly it refers to the report signed by former appointees from Bush and Obama administrations against the proposal to merge roles of the State Department and US Agency for International Development USAID as well as relocation of Bureau of Population, Refugee and Migration to Department of Homeland security. The rhetoric *"Undermine a 1980 law on U.S. treatment of refugees"* depicted that report called this proposal against the values of the United States enshrined in the American law as well, which believes in helping refugees displaced from their homes. US have taken the responsibility to serve as a major assistant into global crises, such steps go against country's social and legal values.

"That land was once a forest where villagers picked wild fruit"

It points to deserted land allocated by Bangladesh as campsite for Rohingya refugees. Refugees encounter certain bias in the host countries they are not treated equal to the citizens. Same is the case with Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. They are allotted such places where life is hard.

"only deposit them in an undeveloped area"

Similarly Jewish refugees, fled Nazi's Holocaust from Berlin in 1939, were also allotted abandoned place. Denied by most countries Jewish refugees were taken by Dominican Republic they were settled on a deserted beach of Sosua under the condition to develop the area. Most of the Jewish refugees had no experience of agriculture or farming and had difficulty to adjust in a remote deserted area. It is inhumane to price the sufferings of displaced people for the development of abandoned land to settle for safety.

"Any reduction of aid would be a death sentence for refugees in Gaza. The work is almost nonexistent. There are not enough jobs".

The notion referred to the narrative of a Palestinian refugee in Gaza who considered aid reduction to UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA by its largest donor United States would cause refugee families starve to death. As there are no employment opportunities for Palestinian refugees they are dependent on the aid provided by UNRWA for their basic needs like, shelter, health, and education. Aid reductions also was the part of Trump policies in the name of saving US resources of the American's only. The depiction of high rate of unemployment also supports othering refugees.

"We are extremely worried...We support 1 million people with food"

Similarly it also referred to the statement of UNRWA's director in Gaza who expressed his concerns on Trump's decision of aid cuts for agency. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees is responsible for huge number of Palestinian refugees displaced 70 years during the formation of Israel in 1948. It provides them with the basic human necessities like food, education, and health assistance. Aid cuts will deprive them badly.

"Syrian refugees in Jordan's remote desert"

Similarly this discourse also referred that Syrian refugees in Jordan were kept at deserted places with harsh climate. Syrian refugees were deprived of basic facilities and accommodations were rarely found. Normally such areas have least human residents.

"He says he'd like to study nursing but, instead, at the moment, flips burgers at a fast-food restaurant".

The example referred to a Sudanese refugee in Israel who fled war in his country about 10 years ago he was a minor an Israel's "dreamer" now at risk of being deported despite been graduated from Israel's education system. He has limited career opportunities as refugee. Israel's anti-refugee policy is also reflected. No matter how long refugees stay in a particular region they are forced to leave without any further delay.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of CDA it can be concluded that both American and Pakistani newspapers represent refugees as "others". The use of language for refugees supports the notion of lexical bias against refugees prevalent in media content. Expressing government policies, socio-economic, cultural and political powers have been exercised through media discourse. Their representation in numbers like "thousands, hundreds," and using metaphor like "tides, waves, flooded" positions them as stranger not only in the host countries but media content also. Moreover "burden", "slipped", "sneak in" "smuggled", "illegal" pronounce them unwanted people having entered in the host countries through illegal means. Since media has important role, especially in humanitarian situations, it is required to reconsider its textual and discursive practices so that information can serve as a form of relief not as impediment.

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