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South Russian Diasporas: Institutional Profile, Problems of Loyalty and Legitimacy*

Anatoly V. Lubsky¹
Southern Federal University, Russia avlubsky@mail.ru

Andrey V. Bedrik²
²Southern Federal University, Russia <u>abedrik@bk.ru</u>

Anton V. Serikov³
³Southern Federal University, Russia aserikov@inbox.ru

Abstract

This article analyses the existing ethnic structure of the population of the Rostov Oblast and the Stavropol Krai. The methodology of this research is based on the socio-cultural and institutional approaches in sociology. Contradictions between the degree of loyalty and the level of legitimacy were revealed, since loyalty often stands rejected or condemned by diaspora members. This contradiction appears to reduce the consolidation potential for diasporas at the inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic levels. Grounds for overcoming this contradiction can be found in a direct dialogue between the state and the national communities based on common public values.

Key words: ethnic, national, association, loyalty, legitimacy.

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Diásporas del sur de Rusia: perfil institucional, problemas de lealtad y legitimidad

Resumen

Este artículo analiza la estructura étnica existente de la población del Óblast de Rostov y del Krai de Stavropol. La metodología de esta investigación se basa en los enfoques socioculturales e institucionales en sociología. Las contradicciones entre el grado de lealtad y el nivel de legitimidad se revelaron, ya que la lealtad a menudo es rechazada o condenada por los miembros de la diáspora. Esta contradicción parece reducir el potencial de consolidación de las diásporas en los niveles interétnico e intraétnico. Los argumentos para superar esta contradicción se pueden encontrar en un diálogo directo entre el estado y las comunidades nacionales basado en valores públicos comunes.

Palabras clave: étnico, nacional, asociación, lealtad, legitimidad.

1. INTRODUCTION

The southern macro-region is one of the most poly-ethnic in Russia. According to the All-Russian Census of 2010 and the Census in the Crimean Federal District of 2014, representatives of more than 220 ethnic groups reside in the territory of the federal subjects that are traditionally attributed to the region of the South of Russia (Results of all-Russia population census of 2010). The ethnic-cultural mosaic of the region features autochthonous South Russian ethne (for example, Adyghe), rooted Slavic population (primarily, Russians and Cossacks),

and numerous ethnic diasporas that were formed historically (for example, Armenians and Greeks) or are currently forming (for example, Arabs). Currently developing ethnic-cultural process of the region is conditioned by its frontier position (Kolosov and Volodin, 2016), immediate proximity to the conflict zones (particularly, the South-East of Ukraine) and the post-conflict areas (the South Caucasus), involvement into the international political process (Syrian refugees, including Circassian diaspora of the Middle East), the internal post-Soviet ethnic political crisis, and ongoing transformation of Russia's model of the nationalities and migration policies. Alongside with the titular ethane of ethnic territorial entities within Russia, diasporas appear to become self-sufficient participants of the public political process, while preserving such functions as national identity catalyst, guardian of cultural features, and subject of the adaptation and integration stage in the migration process (Bedrik et al., 2016). This set of functions distinguishes diaspora groups on the common ethnic landscape of the region and enhances the role of their institutions as subjects that support the implementation of the prioritized state nationalities policy of Russia — harmonization of the inter-ethnic relations while preserving the ethnic-cultural diversity of the population.

The objective of this article is to study the influence of formal and informal institutions of ethnic Diasporas in the South of Russia on both inter-ethnic interactions and development of relations between the ethnic communities and the public institutions. It is suggested that the following factors determine these communication processes: 1) degree of institutionalization and incorporation of the community into the activities of official institutions (consultative, public, governmental, etc.); 2) level of loyalty of the community leaders to federal, regional and local authorities; 3) level of legitimacy of the diaspora institution and its leader from the viewpoint of the community members. Altogether, these factors indicate ethnic and social boundaries of the regional community and have influence on the choice of the integration model of the ethnic community and their behaviour as a group (from isolationism to inter-ethnic consolidation) (Fischer-Lescano and Kocher, 2012).

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research is based on the socio-cultural and institutional approaches in sociology. Socio-cultural approaches Akhiezer (1997), Lapin (2000), Toshchenko (2003) considered interethnic relations on the basis of the universality principle. Here, the behaviour of internally mobilized ethnic groups and the nature of their interactions are determined by a complex of causes, including cultural and socio-psychological characteristics of communities; political, legal and economic parameters of their functioning at the macro-social and micro-social levels; and others. This approach enables to examine inter-ethnic relations between multi-dimensional projections and obtain

results from a higher degree of objectivity. Institutional approach North (1990), Radaev (2001), Korel (2005) considers formal and informal associations of diaspora members as objectified structures of social activity that frames, inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic interactions and selects specific social practices, which are reproduced in relations with the official institutions, the media and other subjects of public space. Socio-cultural and institutional approaches together provide for the comprehensive study of the range of inter-ethnic interactions in a multicultural community that integrates ethnic subjects of different social, historical, legal and political status. Geographically, the study includes the territory of two subjects of the South of Russia — the Rostov Oblast and the Stavropol Krai. These regions appear to be indicative of examination of inter-ethnic relations between the South of Russia. The character of such relations determines the state of the nationalities issue in entire Russian society. In addition, in these two subjects are located administrative centres of two South Russian macro-regional formations — the Southern Federal District and the North Caucasian Federal Districts.

The research is based on the following methods:

• Analysis of the state statistics that describes the ethnic composition of Rostov Oblast and Stavropol Krai and characterises migration dynamics in these regions through 2010 to 2016;

- Analysis of regulatory and legislative acts of the Russian Federation, Rostov Oblast and Stavropol Krai that administer the implementation of the nationalities policy and the migration policy at the federal and regional levels;
- Analysis of the results of focus-group research that was conducted in Rostov-on-Don and Stavropol in April-June 2017. Leaders and activists of regional and local national-cultural associations (public organizations, national cultural autonomies, foreign communities, and national cultural centres) participated in focus groups; each consisted of 8–12 people;
- Analysis of profound interviews with the leaders of national cultural associations in Rostov Oblast (Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Poles, Assyrians, Azerbaijanis, Ukrainians, Belarusians) and profound interviews with senior government officials of the subjects of the Russian Federation (Rostov Oblast and Stavropol Krai) who are responsible for implementation of the national policies. The profound interviews were taken in Rostov-on-Don, Stavropol and Pyatigorsk in April-June 2017.

3. FINDINGS

Rostov Oblast. According to the All-Russian Census of 2010, in Rostov Oblast reside representatives of more than 200 ethnic groups, 36 of which include over 1,000 persons. Book 1: Statistics Digest.

Rostov-on-Don: Rostovstat). The majority of the population is ethnic Russian (3.795.607 persons, or 88.7% of the total population of the oblast). Further, 1.8% of the population belongs to ingenious peoples of the Russian Federation (except for Russians). Among them, the largest ethnic groups are Romanis (16,657 persons), Tatars (13,948 persons), Chechens (11,446 persons), Dargins (8,304 persons), Avars (4,595 persons), Lezgins (3,902 persons), Ossetians (2,801 persons), Tabasarans (2,481 persons), Udmurts (2,411 persons), Mordvins (2,198 persons), Chuvash (2,171 persons), Mari (1,987 persons), Udins (1,866 persons), Ingush (1,520 persons), Kumyks (1,511 persons), Komi and Komi-Permyaks (1,315 persons), Rutuls (1,067 persons). Another 7.6% of the population of the oblast belongs to diasporas: (77,802)(110,727)persons), Ukrainians Armenians persons), Azerbaijanis (17,961 persons), Belarusians (16,493 persons), Georgians (8,296 persons), Moldovans (6,664 persons), Kazakhs (3,046 persons), Uzbeks (2,753 persons), Kirghiz (1,648 persons), Tajiks (1,618 persons). Among diasporas from 'far abroad', the largest ones are Turks and Meskhetian Turks (36,189 persons), Koreans (11,597 persons), Germans (4,234 persons), Jews (3,231 persons), Greeks (2,487 persons), Assyrians (1,774 persons), Yezidis (1,771 persons), Poles (1,074 persons). On this, ethnic Diasporas are not settled homogeneously over Rostov Oblast. Thus, 37.5% of all Armenians live in Rostov-on-Don, and another 20% Myasnikovsky district that is directly adjacent to the Rostov agglomeration (notably, Armenians constitute 55.8% of the population in this district). Similarly, 37.5% of Azerbaijanis of the Don live in Rostov-on-Don, while in other municipal districts their number is less than 1,000 people. The Korean diaspora lives mainly (55.5%) in Rostov-on-Don and near the Rostov agglomeration (town of Bataysk; Azovsky and Aksaysky districts). Diasporas that are related densely along the Don are Kurds (town of Kamensk-Shakhtinsky; Oktyabrsky, Krasnosulinsky and Azovsky districts), Yezidis (town of Bataysk; Salsky and Peschanokopsky districts) and Assyrians (Rostov-on-Don and the Rostov agglomeration; town of Shakhty and Kagalnitsky district).

Likewise, Central Asian Diasporas are predominantly urbanized. 91.4% of Kirghiz, 73.2% of Tajiks and 71.0% of Uzbeks live in urban settlements (83.4% of Kirghiz, 43.2% of Uzbeks and 52.7% of Tajiks live in Rostov-on-Don). The rural component of population prevails only over upon one of the Central Asian diasporas — the Kazakhs (68.5% of the Don Kazakhs are rural residents), although their settlement of the territory of the oblast is mainly dispersed. Among the Don diasporas, the Turkish community is the least urbanized; the majority of its representatives lives in the central (Martynovsky, Semikarakorsky, Bagaevsky and Veselovsky) and the southern (Salsky, Tselinsky, Zernogradsky, Azovsky and Egorlyksky) districts of Rostov Oblast. These two areas accommodate 40.7% and 33.1% of the Turks of Rostov Oblast respectively. Another 15.4% of Turks are settled in the east of the oblast (Volgodonsky and Zimovnikovsky districts). According to the Government of Rostov Oblast, 53 national and cultural organizations operate in the oblast; 46 of them are official and act as legal entities, and 7 are community associations that operate without registration. Analysis of the institutional structure of the national cultural associations of the region revealed certain disproportionality, especially so if compared to the ethnic-demographic portrait of Rostov Oblast. Thus, rather large Diasporas of the region (Kazakhs, Moldovans, Germans or Yezidis) have neither officially registered associations, nor informally functioning ones. At the same time, groups of modest demographic potential and shorter history in the region have their national and cultural associations registered and actively operating, while their leaders are represented in the official structures of the state and municipal authorities. For example, according to the All-Russian Census of 2010, only 578 people who identified themselves as Afghans lived in Rostov Oblast; however, there are two regional organizations, which operate as associations of Afghans: Rostov Regional Public Organization "The Don Afghan Association" and Rostov Regional Public Organization "Union of Afghan Citizens". A similar situation can be observed in the Polish diaspora: Rostov Regional Public Organization "Polonia of the Don" and Rostov City Public Organization — National Cultural Autonomy "Union of Poles of the Don" operate for 1,074 Poles in Rostov-on-Don and Rostov Oblast. Armenians appear to be best represented in the form of public associations, as more than 20 Armenian public organizations are registered at the regional and municipal level.

To implement the prioritised measures of the state nationalities policy of Russia, the Government of Rostov Oblast established the Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations within the Directorate of Socio-Political Communications. The Department has a local office (sector) in the southeast districts of the oblast, which are the most poly-ethnic segments of the region and have the highest level of conflict potential for inter-ethnic interactions (Denisova 2015). The Advisory Council on Interethnic Relations is affiliated to the Government of Rostov Oblast and chaired by the Deputy Governor. The Council includes 32 members; 23 of them are the leaders of the national cultural associations for the region (including Armenian, Azerbaijani, Georgian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Polish, Jewish, Greek, Afghan, Uzbek, Tajik, Kirgiz, and Assyrian Diasporas). The Council meets at least once every six months to discuss topical issues of inter-ethnic relations among the regions. National artistic associations (ensembles, choirs, etc.) are housed by the Regional Centre of Folk Arts that has a department of the national cultures of the peoples of the Don. The Centre coordinates such activities under the supervision of the Regional Ministry of Culture. Stavropol Krai. According to the All-Russian Census of 2010, in Stavropol Krai reside representatives of more than 160 ethnic groups, 37 of which include over 1,000 persons. As in Rostov Oblast, majority of the population is ethnic Russian (2,232,153 persons, or 80.1 % of the total population of the krai). Book 1: Statistics Digest. Stavropol: Stavropolstat). Further, 7.3% of the population of the krai belongs to ingenious peoples of the Russian Federation (except for Russians). Among them, the largest ethnic

groups are Dargins (49,302 persons), Romanis (30,879 persons), Nogais (22,006 persons), Karachays (15,598 persons), Chechens (11,980 persons), Tatars (11,795 persons), Avars (9,009 persons), Kabardians (7,993 persons), Ossetians (7,988 persons), Lezgins (7,900 persons), Tabasarans (6,951 persons), Kumyks (5,639 persons), Abazinians (3,646 persons), Laks (2,644 persons), Circassians (2,326 persons), Ingush (2,227 persons), Aghuls (1,715 persons), Rutuls (1,339 persons), Mordvins (1,250 persons), Chuvash (1,081 persons).

Another 11.2% of the population of the krai belongs to Diasporas. As in Rostov Oblast, the largest diasporas are those of the former USSR: Armenians (161,324 persons), Ukrainians (30,373 persons), Azerbaijanis (17,800 persons), Turkmens (15,048 persons), Georgians (7,526 persons), Belarusians (7,104 persons), Uzbeks (2,615 persons), Kazakhs (1,861 persons), Moldovans (1,758 persons). Diasporas from 'far abroad' are also noticeably represented in the population of Stavropol Krai. The largest ones that have more 1,000 persons are the following: Greeks (33,573 persons), Turks and Meskhetian Turks (10,419 persons), Koreans (6,759 persons), Germans (5,288 persons), Yezidis (3,348 persons), Jews (3,231 persons), Kurds (1,790 persons). Similarly, to Rostov Oblast, settlement of the Diasporas in Stavropol Krai is clearly of sub-regional character. Thus, almost 83% of Greeks live around the Caucasian Spas (Predgorny and Mineralovodsky districts; towns of Yessentuki, Pyatigorsk and Zheleznovodsk). More than a half (about 57%) of all Armenians of Stavropol Krai lives in the same area. The Armenian

diaspora is mostly settled in the towns of Pyatigorsk, Kislovodsk and Georgievsk; and in Georgievsky, Mineralovodsky and Predgorny municipal districts. Second, the largest area of Armenian settlement of Stavropol Krai is the city of Stavropol and the nearby municipal districts (Izobilnensky, Shpakovsky and Grachevsky); 20% of the entire Armenian diaspora live there. Territorial distribution of the Azerbaijani diaspora in Stavropol Krai is more dispersed; however, 35% of the diaspora members live in the urban district of Pyatigorsk. Almost 72% of Kurds are settled in two northwestern districts of the oblast (Novoaleksandrovsky and Krasnogvardeysky). 74% of Turks and Meskhetian Turks live in the southeast of Stavropol Krai (Kursky and Kirovsky municipal districts). 67.5% of Stavropol Turkmens inhabit two eastern districts (Neftekumsky and Turkmensky). 55.5% of another Central Asian diaspora— Uzbeks — are concentrated on Pyatigorsk, the administrative centre of the North Caucasus Federal District. Palette of the national cultural associations for Stavropol Kari better reflects the ethnic-demographic portrait of that region as compared to Rostov Oblast. In total, in the krai more than 110 public organizations operate to preserve the national culture and unite representatives of ethnic communities at the regional or local levels. In Rostov Oblast, the register of national cultural communities reveals that representation of the Diasporas approximates the number of associations for the autochthonous people of the Russian Federation. In Stavropol Krai, the diaspora component prevails over national cultural associations. However, alongside with the diaspora associations, 15 Slavic organizations have been created and are functioning; their

activities aimed at preservation of Russian culture, Slavic traditions, etc. In Rostov Oblast there is only one such organization — the Regional Public Organization for the Protection and Implementation of Civil, Economic and Social Rights "Russian Community". The regional state body that is authorized to manage the sphere of interethnic relations between Stavropol Krai is the Committee for Nationalities and Cossacks. Additionally, the Council for Inter-Ethnic Relations operates in the Governor of the Stavropol Krai; the Council is chaired by the governor and consists of 33 members, including 11 leaders of national cultural associations (among them Armenian, Greek and Jewish Diasporas). The Council meets at least once every six months; among the council members are also representatives of the largest religious communities of Stavropol Krai, social scientists and experts in inter-ethnic relations. Unlike Rostov oblast, similar councils are established in all municipal districts in the krai. Alongside this, there are youth ethnic councils that are supervised by the Ministry of Education and Youth Policy of Stavropol Krai; these youth councils function as the level of the subject of the Russian Federation and in all municipal districts in the krai. Experience of such councils suggests significant mediator potential for national cultural associations. As in Rostov Oblast, the activities of all national artistic associations are coordinated through the Regional Centre of Folk Art and the Ministry of Culture of Stavropol Krai.

4. DISCUSSIONS

The degree of loyalty to the state inter-ethnic relations policy on the part of the public institutions of the Diasporas of the South of Russia was analysed. Their leaders indicate that the entire range of national and cultural associations declares and publicly demonstrates. It supports for the fundamental provision of Russia's nationalities policy — harmonization of the inter-ethnic relations while preserving the ethnic-cultural diversity. However, the profound interviews and work with the focus groups reveal instrumental, rather than axiology, nature of such loyalty. Thus, the majority of the national community leaders prefers not to publicly express their claims to the authorities because of political, legal and economic dependence. Political and legal dependence manifests itself in the prospects for obtaining registration, passing inspections by the justice and security authorities; economic dependence is associated with the possibility of obtaining financial support for the activities of the association (including targeted programs and grants) (Mukomel, 2014). In the case of Diasporas, loyalty to the authorities often contradicts one of the basic functions of the diaspora — maintaining connection with the original homeland and preserving the feeling of sharing its destiny (Frolova et al., 2015). Thus, the Ukrainian national cultural associations had to interrupt the majority of contacts with Ukraine after the year 2014, and the presence of representatives of the Ukrainian diplomatic corps at the official events of the Ukrainian diaspora became mainly attributive. Similar processes are observed in Polish and Georgian communities.

Moreover, leaders of the Ukrainian, Polish and Georgian associations, in each public speech, deliberately oppose the position of their organization of the official position of the governments of their mother countries. During the escalation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2015–2016, leaders of the Azerbaijani and Armenian communities of both regions under study publicly expressed disagreement with the militarization of the conflict zone, distance themselves from any politicized discussions of this issue within the diasporas. This often contradicted both the opinions expressed by the establishment of their national states and the public sentiments of the members of ethnic associations.

In such circumstances, emerges an acute problem of legitimacy of the diaspora institution and its leader from the viewpoint of common members of the association and the entire ethnic community in the region. Maintaining loyalty to the current authority appears to be both a resource and a risk of development of the ethnic community, since if the actions of the authorities contradict the national interests in the community members, a conformist position of the community leaders could be negatively taken by the members of the group, thus undermining the leaders' authority and, therefore, legitimacy (Rudiger and Spenser, 2003). Undermining of legitimacy leads to a split in the association, gives simulative nature of its activities, creates the 'phantom effect' (that is, there emerge several social structures that act in parallel, each claiming to express the interests of the same ethnic group), marginalizes and de-institutionalizes the diaspora (Dmitriev,

2016). Thus, due to actual loss of the legitimate leader, the organization of the German community of the Don disappeared, although it had a solid demographic basis, belonging to the community was regarded as prestigious, and opportunities of studying the national language and culture were unhindered. It is the legitimacy and the charisma of the leader and availability of the economic and social resources that constitute a fundamental factor in the institutionalization of the group (Sikevich, 2012). In most cases, the position of the leader of the association is shared by two sub-positions: the chairman (president) and deputy chairman (executive director) of the organization. The first sub-position is given to the most successful (in the opinion of the community) representative of the ethnics in the region — a large-scale businessman, or a retired high-ranking civil servant, military officer, law enforcement officer, or a senior manager in the sphere of education, science, medicine, and culture. In this case, the leader predominantly performs a representative function and provides political and economic support to the organization's activities. Holder of the second position, which is often occupied by a representative of the ethnic intelligentsia, provides operational guidance of the community, ensures participation in cultural, educational and public events, and responses to potential and actual inter-ethnic clashes. If competition emerges from the two leading positions in the diaspora, it may split the organization, which happened to the Polish, Jewish, Armenian and any other associations of the regions under study. Although, there are other factors can lead to loss of legitimacy of the institution of the community. In the case of the

Armenian, Azerbaijani and some other associations, the authority of the leader is determined by the internal differentiation of the community. Thus, the Armenian community both on the Don and in Stavropol Krai is divided into sub-diasporas by the principle of regional origin of the members: there are Crimean, Baku, Don, Sukhumi, and Georgian, Yerevan, and Central Asian Armenian communities. Dissociation of such sub- Diasporas are projected onto the structure of ethnic associations, their nomenclature, and legitimacy of the leaders. Artificial imposition of the 'one nation - one community' principle by the authorities on activities of the national cultural associations appears to be dysfunctional, since it tends to mark sub-diasporas as 'friend' versus 'foe' or 'good' ones versus 'bad' ones, undermines the loyalty to the diaspora members, reduces potential of the inter-ethnic consolidation, etc. (Malakhov, 2014). In addition, formation of sub-diasporas can be conditioned by the confessional differences between various components of the ethnic group (Lubskiy et al., 2016), for example, the differentiation of Poles into Catholics and Orthodox; Armenians into Orthodox, Gregorians and Catholics; Germans to Lutherans, Catholics and Orthodox; Jews to Orthodox and non-Orthodox, etc. Introduction to a religious component in the life of the diaspora can strengthen ethnic identity and fortify. The community (for example, the Don Greeks won the right to reconstruct the Greek temple in Rostov-on-Don), as much as it may provoke internal segregation (for example, the rift in the Rostov Jews community was caused by attempts of the synagogue leaders. To influence, the

educational process, and the educational program in the Jewish gymnasium that was financed by the community fund).

5. RESULTS

Therefore, analysis of institutional reproduction and functioning of ethnic Diasporas in the South of Russia allows to draw the following conclusions:

national cultural associations Firstly. the not institutionalized in alignment with the ethnic structure of the regional community. Despite the fact that the regional and local authorities positively assess the formation of representing the structures of the ethnic groups, there are barriers that prevent their formalization. Such barriers are, most notably, lack of initiative among the community members, the concept of their ethnic identity, the absence of ethnic intelligentsia or ethnic entrepreneurs who would be capable of taking on ethnic-integrating and preventative role (Bedrik et al., 2015). Artificial barriers emerge if the individuals who claim the role of national leaders do not have the required reputation from the viewpoint of regional and local authorities, or the ethnic group have not been resident in the region for a long period of time (for example, the Afghans and the Kirgiz in the Don region). Disproportions between the ethnic-demographic and ethnic-institutional structures of

population hinder the representation of the interests of ethnic communities at the regional level.

Secondly, declared loyalty of the national cultural associations to the decisions of the political establishment of the region and the country has been often instrumental by nature. It does not seem to reflect the real sentiments of ordinary members of the association and, therefore, it undermines the standing of the diaspora leaders. A loss of legitimacy aggravates the formation of sub-diaspora groups and provokes intra-ethnic competition (Otmer, 2014). In such a situation, the mediation capacity of the community is minimized; it is less likely to act as an independent subject of national policy. If the 'one nation – one community' policy is abandoned, diasporas appear more loyal, diaspora institutions more efficient and able to actually function as subjects of the civil society, rather than imitate such activity.

Thirdly, as the public representation of the national cultural associations expands through the creation of the advisory (ethnic) councils in municipal districts, there arises a greater opportunity to develop the inter-ethnic dialogue. Such expanded representation contributes to the prevention of institutionalized nationalism and negative ethnic stereotypes, raises the level of community loyalty, and strengthens inter-ethnic solidarity. At the same time, the efficiency of the advisory structures is directly determined by the legitimacy of regional and local diaspora leaders (Martin, 2012).

It is a necessary condition for building trust between various public institutions that the authorities refrain from interfering with the internal diaspora processes as long as such processes develop lawfully within the legal framework of the Russian Federation. Otherwise, the advisory structures transform into social simulacra that attributively demonstrate inter-ethnic concord, but fail to provide such.

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