



Afghan Refugee Conundrum: It's Impact on Security and Socio-Economic Challenges for Pakistan

Muhammad Salman^{1*}, Safdar Hussain², Hina Butt³

Abstract

The inquiry was conducted at Chakdara, situated inside District Dir Lower. Chakdara, located in the District Dir Lower, is a significant city that has a prominent center for Afghan refugees. This study aims to assess the influence of Afghan migrants on the unstable security conditions in Chakdara. Aside from the existing population of 29,712 individuals in Chakdara, there is an additional group of 11,184 refugees now staying in a camp. Additional refugees are situated in areas surrounding the camp in Chakdara and its neighboring regions. In order to assess the influence of these migrants on the safety conditions of the region, a sample of 379 persons from the local population was chosen using stratified random selection from the community. By employing the Sekaran technique, it was determined that a sample size of 379 was suitable. The information was obtained through the use of an interview schedule to ascertain individuals' perspectives on the impact of refugees on security. The study's findings demonstrate that the influx of Afghan refugees to Chakdara has resulted in significant social, political, economic, environmental, and ecological challenges. Furthermore, it poses a grave risk to Pakistan's internal security. The influx of immigrants in Chakdara has significantly exacerbated the law enforcement situation, resulting in a substantial surge in criminal activities. The data unequivocally demonstrates that the refugees are exclusively and totally accountable for the proliferation of the Kalashnikov culture, the illicit drug trade, and several other unlawful activities that have occurred in Chakdara. The study's findings indicate that Afghan immigrants have a pivotal role in fostering anarchy and sectarian divisions among the indigenous population of the researched region.

Keywords: Refugees, Security, Impacts, Chakdara

1. Introduction

The commencement of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 initiated a protracted struggle that has had significant and enduring effects on the adjacent country of Pakistan. During the following forty years, the political and social disruptions in Afghanistan have forced millions of Afghan refugees to flee to Pakistan, resulting in a complicated security predicament. The arrival of this large number of people has had a significant impact on Pakistan's social, political, and economic conditions. The Soviet-Afghan War, which took place from 1979 to 1989, resulted in the initial influx of Afghan refugees into Pakistan. More than three million Afghans were compelled to leave their residences as a result of the conflict, with a significant number finding sanctuary in Pakistan due to common cultural, religious, and linguistic bonds (Altındağ, Bakış, & Rozo, 2020). Subsequent waves of migrants arrived because to the persistent conflict and instability in Afghanistan, which included the emergence of the Taliban in the 1990s, the invasion led by the United States in 2001, and the ongoing insurgency. As of 2014, approximately 2.8 million Afghan refugees were residing in Pakistan, including both registered and unregistered individuals (Roehrs 2015).

Pakistan's resources, which are already overextended, have been significantly burdened by the influx of Afghan refugees. The sudden and massive influx of refugees has exacerbated pre-existing socio-economic issues by increasing competition for employment, education, and healthcare services. This situation is particularly severe in regions like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan, where the majority of refugee settlements are situated. The local economy has undergone substantial modifications as a result of the substantial refugee population (Schoch, 2008).

In 1979, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) launched an invasion of Afghanistan, deploying about 100,000 troops. almost the course of ten years, this protracted conflict forced almost three million individuals to flee Afghanistan and seek asylum in neighbouring nations. Pakistan and Iran provided asylum to all Afghan refugees from the 1979 conflict based on shared cultural, religious, and linguistic similarities (World Development Report 2011), contended that the challenge of providing accommodations and other amenities for a large influx of refugees was exceedingly challenging for Pakistan, a financially disadvantaged nation. The Pakistani government established camps in all regions to accommodate Afghan refugees. Most camps were built in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan, provinces bordering Afghanistan.

According to Express Tribune (2014), Pakistan has 2.8 million Afghan refugees, both registered and unregistered. Most refugees live in Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Afghan refugees were resettled in numerous camps in approved locations. Refugees left these camps and settled elsewhere. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has Afghan refugee camps in Dir, Mansehra, Haripur, Nowshera, Mardan, Kohat, Charsadda, and Peshawar.

As stated by (Tariq 2011) when the Afghans sought shelter in Pakistan, the availability of both heavy and light weaponry became widespread, allowing anyone to easily access them. Due to the militarization of Pakistani

^{1*} PhD Scholar, Political Science, Islamia University Bahawalpur. tjpu487@hotmail.com

² Associate Professor, Political Science, Islamia University Bahawalpur

³ PhD Scholar, International Relations, Bahria University Islamabad

society, the law and order situation quickly deteriorated, leading to a loss of government control in protecting citizens from criminals, religious fanatics, and political assassins. Incidents of abductions, theft, deliberate murders, and homicides motivated by religious, sectarian, and honor-related reasons have become commonplace. The overall crime rate reached an unprecedented high within a few years. Due to the militarization of Pakistani culture, individuals have resorted to the employment of sophisticated weaponry to settle even minor disagreements. In his research paper, (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2013) asserts that the United States consistently provided weaponry to the Afghan fighters, known as Mujahideen, during the Afghan conflict. This supply of weapons was facilitated through Pakistan and resulted in the development of a "Kalashnikov culture" in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa engaged in the illicit trade of firearms, resulting in the widespread adoption of the Kalashnikov rifle as an integral part of Pakhtun culture.

During the Soviet-Afghan war, the United States employed propaganda tactics in Afghanistan and Pakistan to undermine the USSR, utilising Islam as a strategic instrument. The United States allocated billions of dollars and established numerous religious organisations within Pakistan. A substantial sum of money was allocated towards the production of religious literature, including books, booklets, and brochures, which included messages and slogans pertaining to the sacred struggle, Jihad. General Zia also encouraged the establishment of religious institutes (Madrasas) throughout the entire country. Prior to 1971, Pakistan had a total of 900 Madrasas. However, by the early 1980s, the number of Madrasas in Pakistan had increased significantly to over 40,000. It is worth noting that a large portion of the teachers and scholars in these Madrasas were Afghan refugees. The teachers referred to the Soviet-Afghan war as a "holy war" or Jihad and initiated the mobilisation of young students to prepare them for this sacred conflict. In Pakistan, the Shia and Sunni sects maintain separate Madrasas. These two factions have had a longstanding rivalry, which escalated in the 1990s when they began carrying out targeted assassinations of their religious professors and attacking their houses of worship using explosives and grenades (Schmeidl 2002).

The primary objective is to underscore the importance of addressing the underlying causes of the crisis through cooperative regional and international endeavors and to offer recommendations for improved management of the refugee situation.

The prerequisite for sustained global assistance and collaboration among neighboring countries is underscored by the persistent refugee issue. It is essential to address the root causes of the violence in Afghanistan in order to reduce the refugee burden on Pakistan. In order to promote security and progress in Afghanistan, it is imperative to collaborate with international organizations, neighboring nations, and the broader international community. This would assist in the safe repatriation of refugees and reduce the burdens that host countries, such as Pakistan, encounter (Aslam, 2001.). Pakistan's socio-economic stability and security have been significantly impacted by the Afghan refugee crisis. A synchronized approach that balances humanitarian concerns against national security priorities is required due to the complex challenges posed by the refugee inflow. This paper aims to enhance the comprehension of these intricate dynamics and provide practical suggestions for more efficient management of the refugee crisis.

2. Literature Review

Pakistan was in a hazardous position regarding the Afghan conflict and refugee absorption due to its shared religion and culture with Afghans and its national interests at the time. The large number of Afghan refugees affected Pakistan's security. Provocative wall graffiti in Peshawar and Quetta, weapons production, the drug trade, sectarianism, nationalism, bombings, and interference in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP), now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Baluchistan are examples. They exacerbate political tensions and increase Afghan-local economic resource disputes. (United Nations Environment Program 2005).

The socioeconomic impacts noted by the (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1997) that the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan initiated a struggle with wide-ranging consequences that extended beyond the boundaries of Afghanistan. Due to the protracted conflict, a significant number of Afghan citizens were compelled to abandon their residences, resulting in more than three million individuals seeking asylum in Pakistan. Due to its close geographical proximity and cultural similarities, Pakistan emerged as the main destination for Afghan refugees. The huge exodus has notable consequences for Pakistan, impacting its socio-economic structure and security dynamics.

According to (Aslam 2001), the arrival of Afghan refugees has had significant socio-economic effects on Pakistan. Pakistan's scarce resources were put under tremendous strain due to the abrupt influx of millions of migrants. The refugee camps, specifically in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan, emerged as focal points of social and economic transformation. These areas experienced a significant surge in population density, placing a burden on public services, infrastructure, and local economies.

(Roehrs, 2015) proposed that the surge in demand for housing, education, and healthcare services resulted in schools and hospitals becoming too crowded. This circumstance worsened pre-existing socio-economic challenges, such as unemployment and poverty, as both natives and refugees vied for limited resources. Moreover, the existence of a substantial refugee population gave rise to fresh economic obstacles. Although several

immigrants made good contributions through their work and business endeavors, the overall effect was varied, placing substantial strain on Pakistan's already vulnerable economy.

According to (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee, 1997) one of the most significant security challenges associated with the Afghan refugee crisis is the proliferation of weapons and the rise of the "Kalashnikov culture." The term refers to the widespread availability and use of automatic weapons, which became prevalent during the Soviet-Afghan War. Refugee camps often served as bases for militant activities and training grounds for Mujahideen fighters.

(Roehrs, 2015 argued that the porous border between Pakistan and Afghanistan facilitated the smuggling of arms and drugs, contributing to an increase in crime rates and violence within Pakistan. The influx of refugees brought with it militant ideologies and extremist groups, which further complicated the security landscape. The "Kalashnikov culture" not only led to a rise in violent crimes but also fueled sectarian conflicts and general lawlessness in many parts of Pakistan.

According to (World Development Report, 2011) the demographic shifts resulting from the refugee influx have altered the ethnic and cultural dynamics in host communities. The influx of mainly Pashtun Afghan migrants in Baluchistan has disrupted the fragile ethnic equilibrium, exacerbating the pre-existing Baloch-Pashtun hostilities. Consequently, there has been a rise in tensions and sporadic instances of violent confrontations among various ethnic factions.

During the initial decade of conflict, the Afghan army and militants were armed and prepared to engage in combat against the Soviet forces. Upon recognising the potential impact of this action aligning with Russian objectives, Pakistan decided to join the coalition led by the United States and provided support to the Afghan Mujahideen. The ISI and CIA assessed that the Afghans would pose a greater challenge to the Soviets and that they were imbued with a fervent determination to wage a "Holy war" against the Red Army in Afghanistan. In Pakistan, the building of Madrassahs training camps for Mujahideen was a prominent priority. The government would get substantial funds and weaponry for the Afghan fighters. A total of 92 training camps for Mujahideen were constructed throughout Pakistan, with 40 of them located in the NWFP. Between 1982 and 1988, the ISI and CIA provided training to over 1.6 million Mujahideen in Pakistan (Kukreja & Singh, 2005).

In Pakistan's federally managed territory, Darra Adam Khel has become a global arms trade hotspot. Over 3000 experienced professionals work in 2600 arms shops and five gun factories. They can make over 100 Kalashnikovs a day. Due to weapon manufacture, According to (Schmeidl 2002) Darra Adam Khel became a major domestic weapons manufacturer quickly. This market sold lightweight and heavy guns. During President Zia's administration, the Afghan Katchi Basti of Sohrab Goth, Karachi was granted amnesty for illegal arms trading. Pakistan has a strong Kalashnikov culture due to the illegal weapons trade. Pakistani society's widespread arming after the Afghan war has led to a rise in terrorism, militancy, insurgency, ethnic and sectarian conflicts, and organized crime in FATA and Balochistan. (Hussain, 2007).

Fair (2009) contended that Several key events during Pakistan's tribal military operations against insurgents sparked public sympathy for the Taliban and hatred toward the government. An airstrike on a religious school in Bajaur killed many children, and rangers allegedly killed defenseless children and women outside the Red Mosque in Islamabad. After that, CIA drone strikes in tribal areas worsened the situation, eroding public trust in the government. These events changed Pakistani law enforcement and politics. The Taliban, the rebel forces opposing the government, garnered sympathy and support from the public, resulting to Talibanization in Pakistan, especially in Pakhtun.

The process of Talibanization had a significant and detrimental impact on the whole state of Pakistan, specifically in the region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The businessmen relocated their operations to other regions of Pakistan, departing from the province. Pakistan saw a significant brain drain as a result of talibanization, with a substantial number of educated and bright individuals emigrating to countries like as Europe and the United States. The process of Talibanization within Pakistan had a negative impact on its worldwide reputation, leading to a lack of confidence among international companies and investors regarding investment opportunities in the country. Between 2004 and 2008, Pakistan experienced significant financial losses due to the spread of Taliban influence (Askari, 2008).

In his research, Gul (2009) asserted that Talibanization has fostered a culture of terrorism in Pakistan. This includes acts such as the Tehreek E Taliban Pakistan (TTP) attacking armed forces, targeted killings of religious, political, and civil society figures, scholars, and doctors, the destruction of schools, NGO offices, and bridges, as well as suicide attacks in mosques and other sacred locations. After the 9/11 attacks, around 35,000 Pakistanis, including 5,000 military, have lost their lives in various terrorist acts. During the year 2008, a total of 2113 acts of aggression carried out by militants and insurgents were documented, resulting in the deaths of 2913 individuals and causing injuries to an additional 5824. Furthermore, due to the deteriorating law and order situation and inadequate security measures, highly skilled and intelligent individuals from Pakistan are emigrating to countries like Canada, Australia, the United States, England, the United Arab Emirates, and South Africa in pursuit of a more promising and secure future. Approximately six million highly intelligent Pakistanis have immigrated to foreign countries in the past three decades, based on a rough calculation. The influence of Talibanization and

terrorism has also impacted international direct investment. Approximately \$200 million is being transferred out of Pakistan to foreign nations by both Pakistani citizens and international investors, as per another approximate calculation.

3. Methods And Procedures

Due to the study's aim, only male respondents from a designated neighborhood were recruited to assess refugees' security impacts. Community members of many occupations and backgrounds provided information. Examples include instructors, social and political activists, university students, religious thinkers, and corporations. Likert-scale interviews were used to obtain data. Data was entered and analyzed using SPSS. The Chi Square test was then used to determine variable correlation.

4. Major Findings

The research was conducted in Chakdara, Dir Lower, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There were a total of 379 participants who were questioned. The survey exclusively included men respondents who were chosen from diverse backgrounds.

Respondents 49% believe refugees are responsible for bringing firearms to their localities. Research region weapon supply is highly linked with refugee presence ($P=0.039$). (Russell 2002) found that the US provided a lot of weaponry to the Afghan Mujahideen to fight the USSR. Several Afghan mujahideen factions and other important people illegally transported these weapons to Pakistan. After discovering a profitable business opportunity, many Afghan migrants trafficked weapons to Pakistan. Migrant gun trafficking has fueled Kalashnikov culture in Pakistan.

A statistically significant link ($P=0.017$) was found between 48% of respondents believing migrants have ties to extremist groups. Research by (Kirui and Mwaruie 2012) supports this analysis. (Kirui and Mwaruie 2012) claims that religious leaders from Afghanistan and Pakistan helped the US propagandize against the Soviet Union by calling the Afghan War a holy war, or Jihad. Most refugee religious leaders were militants. Jihad was often discussed in their sermons. After indoctrination, the kids would be mobilized and sent to terrorist organizations for Afghan battle training.

Refugees in their neighborhood share information with Afghan militants, according to 38% of participants. Correlation is substantial ($P=0.016$). 49% strongly believed that refugees commit terrorist acts like neighborhood bombs. A p-value of 0.031 indicates a significant connection. A statistically significant correlation ($P=0.04$) was seen between religious academics among refugees and religious institutions promoting varied agendas (49%). This observation is supported by (Khan 2016)

The research shows that the US incited Muslims to hate communism throughout the Afghan war. This was achieved by using religious scholars from mosques and madrassas. Zahab's (2000) study supports that the people advised their students and followers to join the Afghan battle, either directly or financially, as a sacred fight against non-believers. These specialists' allegations against Russians would be taken seriously and accepted without doubt. 40% of respondents strongly agreed that refugees are involved in local killings. This too has a strong correlation ($P=0.035$). Zahab's research shows that Afghan migrants attack locals under the guise of religion, sects, or nationalism. Afghan refugees constantly inflame the Shiite-Sunni conflict in Pakistan. The research examines Afghan refugee criminals who commit homicide for profit.

5. Conclusion

Afghan refugees have had major socioeconomic impacts on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan. The rapid and large refugee inflow has strained municipal resources and public services. The next sections discuss these consequences in detail.

As mentioned by (Brosché & Nilsson, 2005) the increased demand for medical services has resulted in a significant overburdening of the healthcare system in the locations that are currently hosting refugees. The standard of care provided to both refugees and local residents has declined as a result of the challenges faced by hospitals and clinics that are overcrowded and unable to manage the high volume of patients. In the same vein, the education system has encountered significant challenges. The quality of education has suffered a decline as a result of the overcrowding in schools, which has resulted in the distribution of limited resources too thinly. Restrictions on the educational opportunities of a substantial number of immigrant children have long-term repercussions for their future prospects and integration into society. The competition for employment opportunities and means of subsistence has been intensified by the influx of Afghan refugees. A substantial number of immigrants have actively pursued employment opportunities in the informal sector, frequently accepting compensation that is less than that of local workers. Consequently, there has been a decline in earnings and an increase in conflicts between refugees and local residents. Additionally, our conclusions are supported by the findings of (Kirui, & Mwaruie, 2012), the local economy has been significantly affected by the influx of individuals. Despite the fact that numerous migrants have made positive contributions through entrepreneurial ventures and labor, the overall economic impact has been inconsistent, as there are significant challenges in effectively managing the increase in demand for products and services. The demand for housing has surged,

leading to elevated rental prices and overcrowded living conditions. Refugee camps, which were initially intended to serve as transient refuges, have since developed into permanent settlements with inadequate infrastructure. This study corroborates the findings of (Khan, 2015) is that the living conditions in refugee settlements are often exceedingly harsh due to the absence of basic amenities such as electricity, sanitation, and potable water. Transportation and public utilities have encountered challenges in maintaining pace with the growing population, which has placed a burden on infrastructure.

5.1. Security Challenges

Pakistan's internal stability has been significantly affected by the intricate security challenges posed by the Afghan refugee issue. The results of this research are consistent with the work of (Roehrs, 2015) which states that the "Kalashnikov culture," frequently referred to as the ubiquitous distribution of firearms, is a pressing security issue. The illicit transportation of weapons and munitions into Pakistan has been facilitated by the arrival of refugees. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the number of violent offenses, including abductions, deliberate assassinations, and armed larceny. Numerous regions of the nation have experienced an increase in overall disorder and vulnerability as a result of the widespread availability of automatic firearms. Radicalization is the term used to describe the process by which individuals adopt extreme beliefs, ideologies, or behaviours that significantly deviate from societal norms. Occasionally, this research extends the framework established by (Clemens, 2017) that refugee settlements have served as recruitment centres for militant organizations. The security situation has been exacerbated by the existence of these organizations, which exploit the vulnerable refugee population to further their own objectives. The internal security of Pakistan has been destabilized as a result of the radicalization in the camps, which has led to the proliferation of extremist beliefs. The unrestricted movement of militants has been facilitated by the permeable border between Pakistan and Afghanistan, thereby impeding efforts to maintain security and stability. In line with the studies conducted by (Census of Afghans in Pakistan, 2005) our research suggests that the refugee influx has led to substantial population changes, which have exacerbated ethnic and sectarian tensions. The pre-existing hostilities between the Baloch and Pashtun communities have been exacerbated by the migration of primarily Pashtun Afghan migrants into Baluchistan. As a consequence, this has led to confrontations that are marked by increased uncertainty and physical force in the region. Likewise, sectarian violence has been exacerbated by the existence of extremist organizations that exploit religious differences to incite conflict. These conflicts have exacerbated social unity and impeded efforts to assimilate refugees into adjacent societies.

5.2. Government Responses and Countermeasures

In response to the socio-economic and security challenges that have resulted from the Afghan refugee crisis, the Pakistani government has implemented numerous countermeasures. The objective of these measures is to effectively manage the refugee population and reduce their influence on national security. These findings echo the conclusions drawn by (Khan, 2016), emphasizing the importance of Pakistan has enhanced border restrictions and intensified monitoring along its border with Afghanistan. The objective of these measures is to prevent the unauthorized admittance of refugees and to combat the trafficking of narcotics and weapons. Despite these efforts, the permeable nature of the frontier has presented obstacles to the effective regulation of cross-border movements. The government has made an effort to improve the regulation and surveillance of refugee camps. This involves restricting the mobility of refugees beyond designated encampments and improving the management of camp amenities. However, the capacity to effectively monitor and regulate the actions of a substantial number of refugees is impeded by their residence outside of these settlements. Similar to the research by (Schoch 2008) our study highlights the role of order to provide humanitarian aid and assistance to the refugee community, the government has collaborated with international organizations, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Voluntary repatriation programs In order to encourage Afghan refugees to return to their country of origin, Pakistan has implemented numerous voluntary repatriation initiatives. These programs, which are frequently implemented in collaboration with the UNHCR, provide practical assistance and monetary incentives to refugees who are willing to return to their home country. Nevertheless, the efficacy of these initiatives has been compromised by the ongoing conflict and the scarcity of economic opportunities in Afghanistan. A substantial number of refugees are hesitant to return to an environment that is characterized by instability, and instead choose to remain in Pakistan despite the challenges they face. Initiatives for Integration and Support Additionally, concerted efforts have been implemented to integrate refugees into the indigenous economy and society. These activities include the provision of healthcare services, educational assistance, and vocational training programs. Our analysis confirms the trends identified by (Altındağ, Bakış, & Rozo, 2020) suggesting that the goal is to encourage self-sufficiency and reduce the dependence of refugees on assistance. However, the scope of these initiatives has been insufficient to satisfy the needs of the entire immigrant population, and significant challenges continue to impede successful integration..

5.3. International Support and Collaboration

Pakistan has received significant support from international organizations in managing the Afghan refugee crisis. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has provided substantial humanitarian assistance, including financial assistance for refugee settlements, healthcare services, and educational programs.

The international community has provided Pakistan with financial support to help manage the economic challenges that come with harboring a substantial number of refugees.

Nevertheless, our analysis confirms the trends identified by (Altındağ, Bakış, & Rozo, 2020) the extent of the issue has frequently exceeded the quantity of international assistance that has been provided. There is a need for more comprehensive and global efforts to address the underlying causes of the refugee crisis, which entails promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. In addition, the international community should endeavor to implement resettlement and integration initiatives in third countries in order to establish enduring solutions for refugees.

Similar to the research by (Schoch 2008) our study highlights the role that refugees frequently engage in a range of criminal activities, including theft, homicide, abduction, and drug trafficking. In addition to criminal activities, their very existence poses a significant menace to the maintenance of law and order in the vicinity. They have been implicated in acts of terrorism such as bombings, arms trafficking, cross-border communication, and association with jihadist organisations. The presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan is a significant strain due to the country's economic fragility and limited resources, making it increasingly unsustainable to accommodate millions of refugees. The refugees have played a significant role in exacerbating the myriad pressing issues that Pakistan is currently grappling with, including terrorism, homicides, abductions, religious extremism, proliferation of weapons, growth of opium poppy, drug trafficking, smuggling of other goods, and corruption within departments such as the police and NADRA. They pose a security threat to Pakistan.

5.4. Recommendations

Based on the comprehensive findings and conclusions of this research, it is recommended that Afghan refugees in Pakistan be confined to their designated camps for the duration of their stay. It is imperative to properly surveil the migration of refugees across Pakistan to prevent any potential risks to domestic security. In addition, it is imperative for the police and other law enforcement organisations to monitor the flow of commodities from Afghan migrants to prevent the illegal transportation of weapons and other dangerous items. Furthermore, it is necessary to expel the unregistered refugees from Pakistan.

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