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Understanding Tourist-Resident Contact and the Role of Contact Theory in Tourism Research

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***Abstract:** Contact between tourists and locals is an important part of exchanging knowledge and travel experiences at a destination. Nonetheless, the status of contacts in tourism development and how it may affect the tourist-resident relationship remain unknown. Tourist-resident contact is not given enough attention in tourism despite its significant effects on tourists' travel attitudes, behaviours, and long-term perspectives. This research study focuses on the concept of tourist-resident contact at a tourism destination and provides an overview of recent advances in tourist-resident contact research. This study adds to the theoretical understanding of contact theory by expanding on the concept of tourist-resident contact in terms of contact backgrounds, contact types, and contact impacts affecting tourist-resident relationships at a tourist destination.*

***Keywords:** Tourist-Resident Contact, Contact Theory, Influences of Contact, Contact Backgrounds; Forms of Contact.*

1. INTRODUCTION

When visiting a place, tourists are constrained by the local culture, and social interactions have developed into an essential component of their overall travel experience (Fan et al., 2019). Contact with tourists can simultaneously impact locals' prosperity and their willingness to support tourism growth (Eusébio et al., 2018; Tsaur et al., 2018). According to practise theory (Echeverri & Skålén, 2011), artists should interact with one another during various societal practices to spark creativity. As a result, contact emerges as a key component of studies on the relationship between tourists and residents (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005; U. Maruyama et al., 2016; C. P. Yu et al., 2011). Additionally, a convenient interaction with visitors may increase locals' favourable perceptions of visitors and the development of the tourism industry (Carneiro et al., 2017); however, an intrusive interaction with visitors may exacerbate the destination conflict

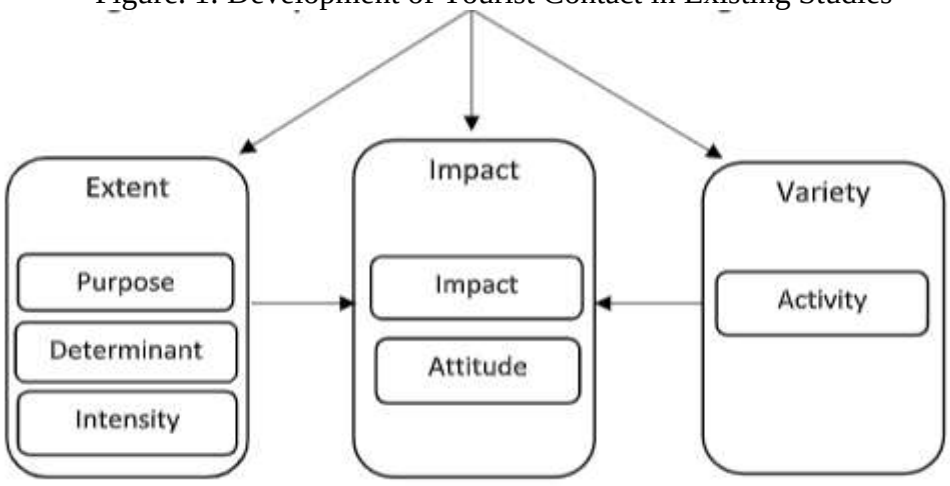
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and reduce public acceptance and tolerance of the destination culture (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017; Pizam et al., 2000).

Therefore, achieving societal resistance to tourism requires an awareness of the interactions between visitors and locals (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017). Diverse groups of people, including travellers, hosts, service providers, and authorities, come together naturally as a result of tourism. In tourism events, several sorts of contact, including those between tourists and locals, tourists and service providers, and tourists and destination marketing organisations, may occur and may have an impact on related groups (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011; D. G. Pearce & Schott, 2005; Rihova et al., 2015; Wu, 2007). However, contact in the tourism industry sets itself apart from general intercultural contact due to its uniqueness in contact circumstance, length, and decisions (P. Pearce, 1982). Tourist-resident contact does not receive enough attention in tourism research, which is surprising given the importance of contact. The backgrounds of contact between visitors and locals are particularly understudied because of the dearth of analytical research studies focusing on contact. Interaction has traditionally been thought of as a homogenous concept, so it is still unclear how different types of contact will affect the two participant groups. Additionally, although the importance of contact in the interaction between visitors and locals is acknowledged, the processes by which various activities are transformed into relationships are yet unknown. A thorough investigation into the contact exchanges between visitors and locals is urgently needed because the development of a relationship necessitates the involvement and efforts of both participant groups. Figure. 1 depicts the development of tourist contact throughout previous research studies.

Figure. 1: Development of Tourist Contact in Existing Studies



Source: (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017)

The objectives of the present research study are to provide an overview of the current growth in tourist-resident contact research, to comprehend different tourist-resident interactions through societal contact, and to define the potential directions for future research in this area. This research study adds to the body of knowledge by giving a systematic assessment of the interactions between visitors and locals. The practical implications of this research study's

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findings can benefit various destination players, including destination marketing authorities, tour operators, and the host communities, in establishing mutually beneficial tourist-resident relationships.

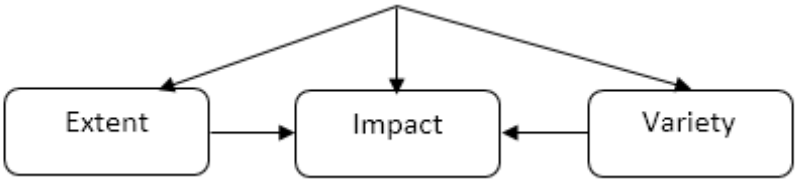
Literature Review on Tourist-Resident Contact

Characterization and Dimensions of Tourist Contact

Contact typically occurs by chance between two or more people and is a component of local culture (Wey et al., 2019). People create rules, organisations, and frameworks for communal living to interact with one another. Multicultural interaction in tourism refers to the occurrence of people from various social contexts in events that are related to tourism (Fan, 2020; Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017; Y. Yu et al., 2014)).

Since the early 1970s, the dimensions of contact have received significant attention. According to (Cohen, 1972) Figure. 2, "the volume and variety of social encounters the tourists make during their visits will greatly influence the way they affect each other." As a result, the three components of measuring contact are contact level, contact diversity, and contact influence.

Figure. 1: Development of Tourist Contact in Existing Studies



Source: (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017)

Early studies (Rothman, 1978; Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2012), made the assumption that contact activity and incidence were the main factors to be considered when evaluating contact. Additional research made use of a variety of factors to assess the contact's overall participation. As proposed by (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017) the activity, number of contact points, occurrence, quality, strength, effect, valency, concentration, authority, and equilibrium were all used in several mixtures to evaluate contact. In the tourism context both quntity and quality of contact should be considered when measuring their effects on tourists' perceptivity (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017).

Ancestry of Tourist-Resident Contact

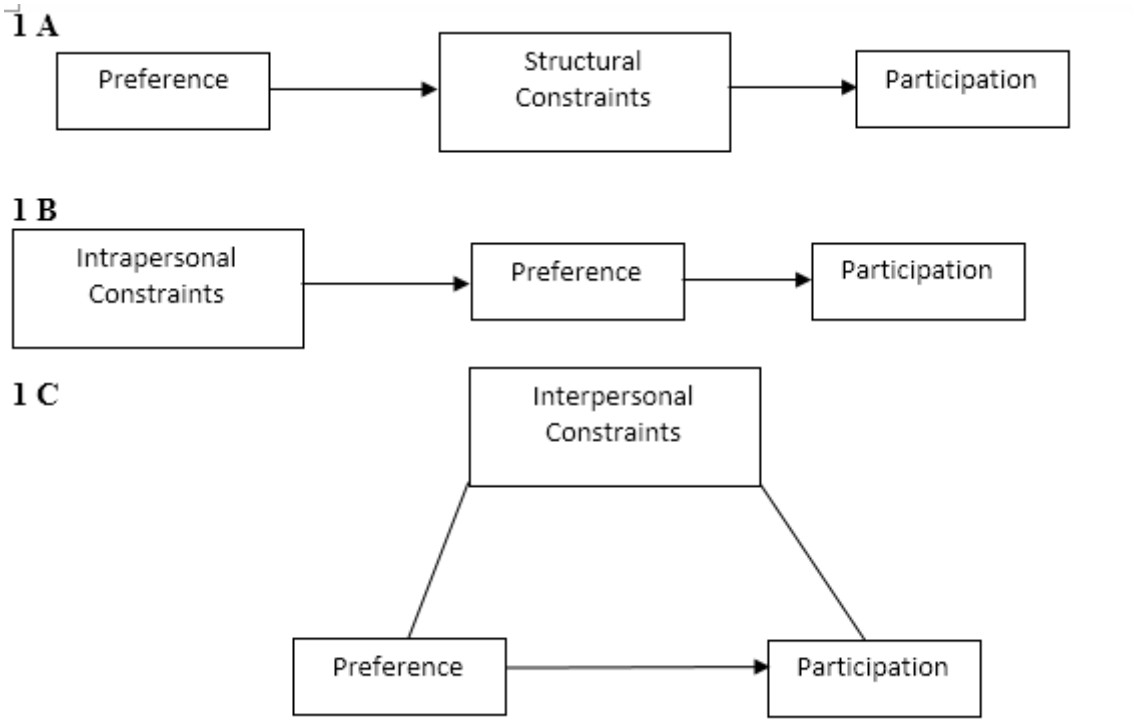
Tourist-Resident Contact backgrounds of societal contact between tourists and residents are the starting point for contact happenings. According to the hierarchical constraint theory (Crawford et al., 2009), leisure and tourism behaviour constraints were classified into three types: intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural barriers. Intrapersonal barriers define independent emotional situations and characteristics that interact with leisure preferences. Interpersonal barriers are the results of interpersonal contact or the relationship between a person's characteristics. Interfering and ecological issues between behavioural inclinations and

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genuine involvement are determined by structural barriers. Constrictions, it is argued, are met gradually, first at the intrapersonal level, then at the interpersonal level, and finally at the structural level. Exploring the groups of hierarchical constraints theory in understanding the backgrounds of contact between tourists and hosts, there are three groups of contact backgrounds depicted in Figure 3.

Figure. 3: Leisure & Tourism Behaviour Constraints



Source: (Crawford et al., 2009)

As depicted in Figure 3, the first set of intrapersonal backdrops refers to elements that reflect the suitability, personal knowledge, and emotional trait of the individual. According to some, temperament is a crucial element in the social interactions between two groups of people (Lin et al., 2019; Plog, 2001). In multicultural settings, linguistic proficiency is also essential for effective communication (Lin et al., 2019). From the viewpoint of a tourist, the degree and nature of contact with locals at a site determine the traveller's perseverance and character (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017). For instance, visitors who come to learn about the way of life and culture of a place are more likely to connect and engage with the locals to fulfil their expectations and gain the desired insight and information. Tourists may not communicate with the locals very often while travelling if they are reliant on their travel companions for all travel-related campaigns, information requests, and on-the-spot decisions.

The second category is interpersonal backgrounds, which include the dual propensity for societal interactions. Visitors who prefer ingroup contact or seek interpersonal empirical legitimacy while travelling may not interact with locals very much (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, &

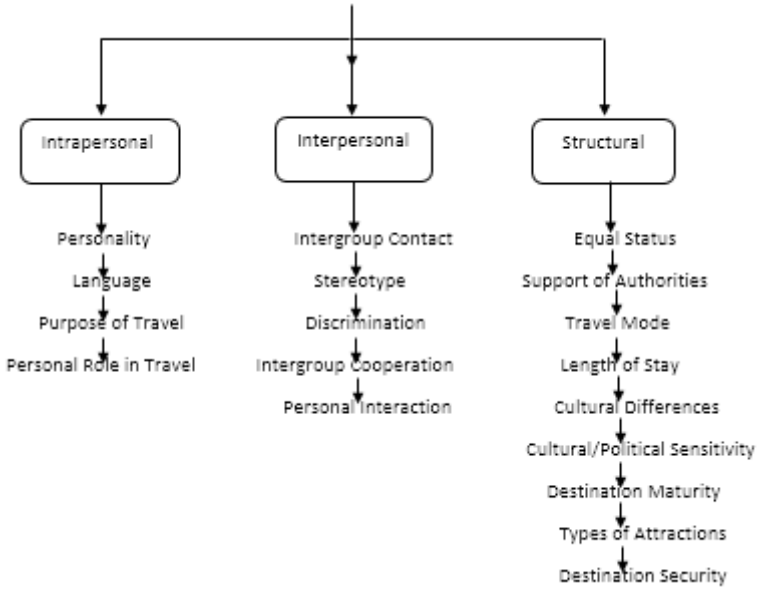
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Tavitiyaman, 2017). Discrimination and stereotypes may also have an equal impact on the interaction between visitors and hosts (Tung, 2020; Ye et al., 2013). According to contact theory, (Allport, 1979), intergroup contact may reduce bias between group members under certain circumstances, involving shared goals and intergroup collaboration in addition to individual exchanges. This theory provides the initial orientation for tourist-host contact situations (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017).

The structural backgrounds, which relate to those ecological contexts or circumstances for societal engagement, make up the final group of contact backgrounds. According to contact theory, maintaining organisations in an analogous position and ensuring their survival was essential for a specific favourable contact outcome (Allport, 1979). From a tourism standpoint, several particular factors have been shown to influence the interaction between visitors and hosts. The likelihood of exchanges and interactions between tourists and hosts may vary depending on whether a person takes a package tour or travels independently throughout their trip (Cohen, 1972). Social distinctions between visitors and locals may distort communication sense and prevent greater interactions and exchanges (Fan et al., 2023) People with severe social and political understanding, such as those with historical grudges, religious hostility, and regional strife, may not have favourable conditions for visitor-host interactions (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017; Tomljenovic, 2010).

Figure. 4: Ancestry of Tourist Contact



Source: (Fan, 2020)

Additionally, the degree of interaction between visitors and hosts may be influenced by the destination's maturity, the kind of attractions, and its level of safety (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Tavitiyaman, 2017). For instance, well-established and well-promised destinations can encourage self-serviced tourism as opposed to relying on the locals. Metropolis locations

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provide fewer social connections and exchanges than cross-cultural and eco-tourism destinations as indicated in Figure 4.

Influences of Tourist-Resident Contact

Tourism-related interactions result in a variety of effects on both visitors and locals. The effects of contact have been carefully considered in tourism activities from the perspectives of both tourists and locals (Bochner, 1982; Cusher & Brislin, 1996; Y. Yu et al., 2014). The effects of visitor-host interaction are summarised in Figure 4. Contact with the locals is said to be helpful for tourists, who depend on the quality and amount of contacts, to acquire recommendations and direction for the tour as well as knowledge about the destinations (Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Lin, 2017). A series of attitude changes may also occur, such as acknowledging social and cultural changes, changing destination descriptions, increasing emotional empathy for the alleged residents (Aleshinloye et al., 2020), improving tourism knowledge and travel attitudes (Fan et al., 2023; Li & Liu, 2020), and enhancing individual cultural capability (Altinay & Bowen, 2006; C. C. Chen et al., 2012; Y. Chen et al., 2020; Wei et al., 1989). A close relationship with the locals may have various effects, such as making friends with them and changing one's cultural identity (Cohen, 1972; Moufakkir & Kelly, 2010). However, contact without compelling factors, such as equality of status, shared objectives, intergroup cooperation, authority backing, and personal exchange, may result in unfavourable contact outcomes, such as prejudice and anxiety (Maoz, 2006; Ward & Berno, 2011) and intergroup hostility (Saguy et al., 2009). From the perspective of the locals, regular interaction with the tourists may well result in a favourable attitude toward the exchange of tourism activities (Akis et al., 1996), develop the apparent effects of tourism on their quality of life (Carneiro et al., 2017; Eusébio et al., 2018), increase the sustenance, increase the emotive harmony of the locals, lessen the societal detachment from tourists (Tsaur et al., 2018). On the other side, excessive contact could have negative effects, leading to disputes between tourists (Qiu Zhang et al., 2016), feelings of tiredness, aggravation, and resentment (Joo et al., 2018) and locals since inhabitants become unable to appreciate their own sharelongings and environment (Qiu Zhang et al., 2016) and are unable to participate effectively in daily activities.

2. DISCUSSIONS

Contact between tourists and locals is seen as a special type of cross-cultural interaction. Tourists typically spend a short amount of time at well-organized locations. Tourists were distinguished from other cross-cultural encounters, such as migrants and transitory travellers, by their reasons for travelling (P. Pearce, 1982). Tourists often travel in a minor sociological bubble of their native culture because it is not intended for them to integrate into the local community (Barthes, 1973). While tourists may recognise cultural surprises to some level, they may find them fascinating and thrilling since they can sate their inspiration-seeking enthusiasm (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In addition, tourists' relative riches place them in a unique circumstance within the host society, like foreigners or intrepid travellers. As a result, they have more chances to observe and assess the host community from a tourist perspective (P. Pearce, 1982).

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Contact theory (Allport, 1979) was widely used in several research studies to examine tourist attitudes about tourism and the outcomes of tourism contact (Fan et al., 2023; Fan, Zhang, Jenkins, & Lin, 2017; Farmaki, 2017; Tomljenovic, 2010). Contact theory initially offered a strategy to lessen bias and stereotyping between two socially dissimilar places (Y. Yu et al., 2014). It suggests that taking into account certain unique circumstances, such as equality of status, shared objectives, intergroup cooperation, and support from authorities, intergroup contact can reduce discrimination among group members. In other words, the effects of touch depend on the nature of the encounter and the circumstances surrounding it. Additionally, there is a method where interaction could have the opposite impact of promoting mutual admiration and respect and increasing discrimination and scepticism under certain unpleasant circumstances (Tomljenovic, 2010). Additionally, unwelcome, unforeseen, or burdensome contact could promote rivalry and difficulty, such as political conflict (Guo et al., 2006; Kim & Prideaux, 2003; Qiu Zhang et al., 2016) and financial collapse (Anson, 1999).

Numerous studies have refuted the aforementioned findings, which claim that intergroup contact does not always reduce intergroup pressure, discrimination, hostility, and unequal behaviour (Anastasopoulos, 1992; Milman et al., 1990; Pizam et al., 1991). As originally mentioned by contact theory, the contact situations between the two sides have a significant impact on the contact outcomes (Pizam & Jeong, 1996; Thyne et al., 2006). The peculiar nature of societal engagement in tourism may have a negative impact. The limited and close interactions between the two ethnically disparate groups during the relatively brief journey time may cause communication issues and heighten hostility, resentment, and mistrust (Nyaupane et al., 2015). For instance, intercultural volunteerism is said to reinforce unfavourable impressions among visitors and locals because many volunteers assume locals to be "less-capable" or "inferior" (Sin, 2009; Woosnam & Lee, 2011). In these situations, it is more likely that people will have negative attitudes toward the locals and the tourist site the better the societal contact.

The measurement of visitor-resident contact has been the subject of a few research investigations. The measurement of the various aspects of tourist-resident contact is summarised in Table 1. Happenings of contact were adapted (Mo et al., 1993; Rothman, 1978; Y Reisinger & LW Turner, 2003) to serve as the individual indicator of societal contact. In order to study the tourist-resident contact (Woosnam & Aleshinloye, 2012), applied contact frequency. Furthermore, research looked at several metrics to investigate the comprehension and experience of the contact. To forecast inhabitants' attitudes toward tourism growth, the quality and frequency of tourist-resident interactions were examined (Akis et al., 1996). (Islam & Hewstone, 1993) investigated the relationships between a number of dependent variables and the quantity, frequency, and quality of contacts. In order to assess the closeness of societal interactions, frequency, activity, and contact intensity were taken into account (Berscheid et al., 1989). As part of the study, (Huang & Hsu, 2009) examined the activity, frequency, influence, valence, intensity, power, and symmetry of consumer-to-consumer exchanges during tours, building on the findings of (Berscheid et al., 1989; Islam & Hewstone, 1993). Because there is so little consensus among the research studies that are now available, the development of this field of study has been chaotic and unpredictable. Because previous studies were unable to evaluate the many measures of societal touch, there was a discrepancy in how contact was applied (Table. 1), particularly in tourism research.

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Table. 1: Summary of Measurement of Tourist-Resident Contact

Author	Year	Dimensions of Tourist-Resident Contact									
		Activity	No. of Contact Points	Frequency	Quality	Strength	Influence	Valence	Intensity	Power	Symmetry
Rothman	1978	×									
Berscheid et al.,	1989	×	×			×					
Mo et al.,	1993	×									
Islam & Hewstone	1993		×	×	×						
Akis et al.,	1996			×	×						
Reisinger & Turner	2002	×									
Huang & Hsu	2010	×	×				×	×	×	×	×
Woosnam & Aleshinloye	2013			×							
Carneiro & Eusébio	2015				×		×				
Yilmaz & Tasci	2015					×					
Fan et al.,	2017					×					

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Carneiro et al.,	2018	×					×				
Joo et al.,	2018	×		×			×				
Li & Liu	2020				×			×			

Contact theory has been regarded as one of the most effective methods for illuminating intergroup relations in studies in sociology and psychology. According to (Allport, 1979), intergroup contact can be a crucial tool for reducing prejudice among group members under some specific conditions, such as equality of status, shared objectives, intergroup collaboration, authority backing, and interpersonal connection. Healthy interactions between group members would result from properly managed contact since prejudice may be reduced as one learns more about other group members and one's impression can be improved by that contact person, which will then improve perceptions of the group as a whole (Wright et al., 1997). The relationship between tourists and locals entails some considerations that must be made and worked on if it is to be preserved (D Nash, 1989), just like any other communal association.

3. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the value of comprehending the interactions between visitors and locals through social interaction. It is possible to identify significant theoretical contributions. On the basis of earlier research studies, the research study first offers a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the sociological relationship between tourists and locals. In terms of contact ancestry, contact forms, and contact influences, it summarises the development of the conception. As per the hierarchical constraint theory, this review makes an important effort to categorise various societal contact ancestry into intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural stages (Crawford et al., 2009). Such clusters advance our knowledge of various contact ancestries and clarify the immediate and long-term effects on societal contact. In addition, the study compiles many contact-related affects on both tourists and locals. Review findings imply that interactions may easily start a variety of influences on visitors and locals, both positively and negatively. The traditional benevolence toward contacts and peace is encountered, which is that societal touch may well consistently produce positive qualities for both contact groups. It is advised to conduct more research to determine the extent of tourist engagement in various contexts. It would be beneficial to look further into how those tourist contact proportions interact with one another. In addition, it will be fascinating to investigate the nature of social interactions between visitors and hosts in various niche industries where intensive interactions between visitors and locals are required, such as bed and breakfast (home-stay), farm tourism, and volunteer travel. The occurring in social contact are anticipated to be regulated as a result of their diverse journey objectives and travel behaviours, and the tourist types in those areas may contrast one thing at a time. In order to provide a comprehensive understanding to both researchers and the tourism sector, it will be effective to concentrate on the aforementioned tourism segments and improve the previous tourist forms.

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