

Family Influences on Rural and Urban Migration in Thailand

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ABSTRACT

The study aims : (1) to describe the reasons for migration of males and females moving to rural or urban regions during 1975-1980 time period; and (2) to explain why family reasons influence males and females to migrate into rural and urban regions.

Sources of data are from the one percent census sample tape derived from the 1980 Thai population and housing census.

Results reveal : (1) that family reasons particularly "to accompany persons in household" is the major reason of rural and urban in-migration expressed by very young and retired male migrants and by female migrants of almost all ages; and (2) that the family is the base for social organization in Thailand; therefore, family reasons will reflect the impact of family norms and values on the migration of Thai people.

Recommendations are suggested for the application of family patterns to better explain the migration phenomena in Thailand and other developing countries.

INTRODUCTION

Based on the 1980 census of Thailand indicated that family reasons have gradually become important factors for rural and urban migration particularly for rural-to-rural, urban-to-rural, and urban-to-urban migrants. When sex differences are considered, male migrants at their early and retired ages expressed that family reasons significantly influenced their decision to migrate to rural or urban regions. Furthermore, female migrants at almost all ages emphasized that family reasons stimulated them to move. To accompany person in household is the most frequently given reason among other family reasons.

It is, therefore, most important to find ways of explaining why the family factors have become important reasons for rural and urban migration of males and females in Thailand. The analyses of Thai family patterns will enhance knowledge and understanding to better explain these phenomena. In doing so, this research will be based upon the reasons for migration which were first asked for those who moved within five years preceding the 1980 census. From the analyses of the findings, recommendations are made for the application of family patterns to better explain the migration phenomena in Thailand as well as other developing countries.

Thai family Patterns

The predominant forms of family patterns in

Thailand belong to Thai rural residents. Details of practice, however, vary between rural and urban places. Nevertheless, overall similarities exist in such matters as attitudes toward choice of residence, and an individual life cycle.

Characteristics of Rural Thai Family

There are two significant types of rural Thai families; those are, a nuclear family, and a temporary extended family.

A nuclear family is an ideal type of many households. In contrast to American families, Thai families often include other related members in the family because of economic and social necessity. For example, households may include aged persons, children and unmarried siblings of the head of the household brought into the family because of the dissolution of those siblings through death, divorce or impoverishment.

A temporary extended family occurs when young couples do not establish independent households immediately after their marriage. They are likely to stay with the wife's parents or sometimes with those of the husband. The young couples are usually given a room in their parents' house. The husband in return will help with the work on their parents' land. This kind of family pattern is called a temporary extended family because such extended family pattern generally continues for only 1-3 years. Then, the couples are likely to move out and establish their own home. Another

temporary extended family pattern may occur when a son or daughter in the family lives with his or her spouse under the same parental house until their death. This is in social recognition of the care he or she has given to the parents in their old age. He or She will eventually become head of the household and generally inherits the family residence along with a share of land equal to that of the other siblings.

Characteristics of Urban Thai Family

The significant type is in some wealthy urban families; that is, a compound family.

A compound family is a family pattern which indicates the relative subordination of women to men. Male household heads have the highest authority in the family. Family incomes depend solely on the head of the households. At present, the wealthy urban families are giving attention to a western education. Both girls and women are educated and are emerging as professional equals in the fields formerly reserved to men of the upper groups.

A nuclear and temporary extended family. Among the middle and lower-income groups, the urban families tend to be as much like the rural families as circumstances permit. Among the very poor living under semi-slum conditions, the nuclear family households probably show little tendency to include married children even on a temporary basis. However, in the suburbs of the Bangkok Metropolis, the conditions are less intensely urban and rural patterns will correspondingly be more or less well preserved. This depends largely upon the size and population density of the particular urban area.

In general, rural and urban family members recognize that they should repay their parents for having brought them into the world and cared for them in infancy and that elder siblings owe a debt of gratitude.

Individual Life Cycle

There are five stages of life recognized by thai people; those are, infancy and early childhood, childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. They are determined by the type and extent of the individual's activity as well as by his/her relationship to others at each stage.

Infancy and Early Childhood In general the young child is treated permissively. It is nursed whenever it cries. He/She is weaned and toilet-trained gradually, and is often fondled. A baby is introduced to solid food early to supplement its mother's milk. Complete weaning occurs late.

Childhood At about 2 years old, the Thai child is brought to realize that it is no longer the baby of the family. Some mild socializing punishment is initiated. At this time the child is taught respect for elders and to accept a place in the family hierarchy. Elders, even the

next older brother or sister, deserve respect.

A child stays entirely with the family. In general, Childhood is a carefree, happy time, and until they are 7 or 8 years old. At this age, boys and girls must begin to help around the house. At 8 the child enters the government primary school and attends classes until he/she has completed the required 6-year primary course, or reaches 15 years of age.

Adolescence As the children approach the end of their primary shcooling (in case they are too poor to afford further education), the pressure to assume an adult workload becomes progressively greater. Along with this grater involvement in adult economic activities, adolescents begin flirtations which eventually lead to the selection of potential marriage partners. Before marriage, which usually occurs in the boy' and girl's early or middle twenties, a boy may wish to enter a novice. If he is over 20 years old, he may wish to become a monk. For a family, having a son enters the Brotherhood of Monks often involves considerable economic sacrifice for them since he has only recently been able to do an adult's work, but in return this brings them much merit. Whether a man decides to remain in the Brotherhood of Monk for a few days, during the whole Phansa, 3 months' rainy reason, or for a much longer time depends on his personal choice.

At the age of 20, men except those who are students must register for military service and generally are called for service at 21. For many of those who are drafted, the period of military service is the only time they are away from their home and in extensive contact with urban life. At the end of the training period, recruits return to their villages and soon resume the rural routine. Most expect to end their days as such.

For a rural girl, entry into adolescence and adulthood comes in more gradual and less marked steps. However, certain significant transitional phases can be observed. Girls are expected to help their parents take care of the domestic works, to go by herself to market, and to have a permanent wave when she is 15 or 16. Courtship is generally carried out in the evening around their homes, and in the work groups at planting and harvest time and at the festivals. The young men go in pairs or groups to visit girls at their homes. Once a girl has indicated her preference to a particular boy, his friends will drift away. The boy may then serenade the girl, recite love poems or talk nonsense.

In most cases young people select their own marriage partners. Parents also can freely express their disapproval of a proposed match, and their advice is usually taken.

Adulthood The full responsibilities of adulthood begin with the establishment of a new house-

hold. Most young couples begin to prepare for their own establishment while they are living with the parents of one or the other. In the case of a couple that is to reside in the wife's house until she inherits the property, the new household is not established until after the death or retirement of her parents. Then, the opinions of the pair are listened to as their own and not those of the parents. The wife in particular gains in stature. She mostly performs the roles of homemaker. She always has an important voice in the handling of the family's finances and frequently holds the purse strings. In the commercialized delta area where large amounts of money are brought in, the husband seems to keep control of the income himself. In most families, income earned by the teenage children remains their own property.

The period of active adulthood continues through the years of rearing children. The government has officially set the age of 60 as the final year for retirement from office, and this seems to correspond with the Thai understanding of the beginning of old age.

Old Age Old age is a time for retiring from office and rest. Old people are likely to turn over the headship of the household to the younger generation particularly to a son or son-in-law, and concern themselves more with religious activities, and the accumulation of merit. Old age is not a period of undignified idleness. Old men will busy themselves with temple activities, hobbies, or doing odd jobs around the compound. Old women, though retired from active household management, continue to take care of grandchildren and help in household tasks. Old people particularly in rural areas are treated with polite deference and are served and cared for by their children.

Working Definitions

1. **Family Influences** refer to Thai family patterns. Those are characteristics of rural Thai family, characteristics of urban Thai family, and an individual life cycle which become an important explanation for rural and urban migration of males and females in Thailand.

2. Urban/Rural area

An **urban area** refers to a municipal area which is a legal unit established by the Royal Decree of the 1953 Municipal Act. There are three categories of municipal areas : Nakhon (city), Muang (town), and Tambon (commune).

A tambon municipality is established wherever it is deemed appropriate (Pejaranonda et al, 1984).

A muang municipality is established in each area where the administrative seat of the provincial government is located or where the population is at least 10,000 persons with an average density of not less than 3,000 persons per square kilometer. The

sources of tax revenue must also be sufficient for the execution of municipal affairs as stipulated in the 1953 Municipality Act.

A nakhon municipality is established in areas where the population is at least 50,000 persons with an average density of not less than 3,000 persons per square kilometer. Tax revenues must also be sufficient for the executive of municipal affairs as stipulated in the 1953 Municipality Act.

A rural area refers to a sanitary district or non-municipality which is established by the Ministry of Interior under the provisions of the Sanitary District Act of 1952.

In this study the municipal areas in four regions and Bangkok Metropolis are referred to as urban regions. Whereas non-municipal areas in four regions, except Bangkok Metropolis, are termed rural regions.

2. **Migration** refers to the movement of male and female migrants who have changed their place of residence into rural or urban regions in Thailand within five years preceding the census date (March 31, 1975 to April 1, 1980). Only persons aged 5 years and over are considered.

DATA AND METHODS

Sources of data

The reasons for migration of male and female migrants moving to rural or urban regions in Thailand during 1975-1980 time period are from the one percent census sample tape which are derived from the 1980 Thai Population and Housing Census data on migration.

Analysis procedures

The similarities and differences of the reasons for migration of male and female migrants moving to rural or urban regions will be analyzed and presented by percentage differences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reasons for Migration by Different Age Groups

Differences in reasons for moving by ages of male and female migrants to either rural or urban regions between 1975-1980 are considered (Table 1).

There are three general categories of reasons for moving; those are, economic, educational, and family reasons.

To accompany other members in their households to urban regions is a highly important family reason for male migrants aged 5-14 (78.8 percent between ages 5-9, and 55.8 percent between ages 10-14). This migration pattern may reflect the migration of children with their parents since male migrants age 15 and over giving "to accompany other family members"

Table 1 Percent migrants 5 years of age and over, by reasons for moving, age groups, sex and urban and rural regions. 1975-1980

Age and Sex	Reasons for Moving to Urban Regions Between 1975-1980														
	Grand Total	Economic Reasons ¹				Education Reason	Total	Family Reasons ²				Unknown			
		Total	1	2	3			1	2	3	4	5	6		
Male															
5-9	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	6.5	82.6	-	78.8	1.2	0.7	-	1.9	10.9
10-14	100.0	10.2	8.4	0.9	0.2	0.7	16.0	62.2	0.5	55.8	1.1	1.8	2.5	0.5	11.6
15-19	100.0	42.5	37.5	2.4	1.8	0.8	24.3	25.9	0.7	21.7	0.6	1.0	1.8	0.1	7.3
20-24	100.0	58.2	44.7	1.8	10.7	1.0	13.2	21.8	3.2	13.7	0.7	2.5	1.4	0.3	6.8
25-29	100.0	63.4	46.0	2.9	12.8	1.7	2.1	23.6	5.2	9.4	1.0	7.0	0.6	0.4	10.9
30-34	100.0	67.2	40.6	3.4	21.4	1.8	1.0	20.5	3.2	5.1	1.2	10.0	-	1.0	11.3
35-39	100.0	66.8	38.4	3.4	23.3	1.7	0.7	21.5	1.0	3.4	2.4	14.4	-	0.3	11.0
40-44	100.0	66.6	39.9	4.2	21.1	1.4	0.5	23.0	1.9	3.7	1.9	15.0	-	0.5	9.9
45-49	100.0	58.2	34.9	0.7	21.9	0.7	-	27.5	-	5.5	0.7	19.2	1.4	0.7	14.3
50-54	100.0	51.0	28.1	5.2	16.7	1.0	2.1	35.4	1.0	9.4	4.2	20.8	-	-	11.5
55-59	100.0	63.1	26.3	5.3	29.8	1.7	-	31.6	-	8.8	5.3	15.8	-	1.7	5.3
60-64	100.0	21.0	10.5	2.6	7.9	-	-	60.6	-	15.8	15.8	23.7	-	5.3	18.4
65 >	100.0	13.2	11.3	1.9	-	-	-	62.3	-	41.5	1.9	17.0	-	1.9	24.5
Female															
5-9	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	8.4	78.8	-	73.1	2.2	1.3	-	2.2	12.8
10-14	100.0	26.0	23.6	1.1	0.2	1.1	12.5	51.8	-	50.8	-	0.8	-	0.2	9.7
15-19	100.0	42.2	38.5	1.7	1.4	0.6	23.3	28.3	3.8	22.9	0.8	0.6	-	0.2	6.2
20-24	100.0	33.6	28.2	1.2	3.0	1.2	19.1	41.1	8.6	30.3	0.8	1.1	0.1	0.2	6.2
25-29	100.0	32.9	25.3	2.0	4.3	1.3	2.2	59.2	9.8	44.9	1.3	3.0	0.1	0.1	5.7
30-34	100.0	29.8	24.5	1.2	2.9	1.2	0.7	60.9	6.1	50.1	1.5	2.9	0.3	-	8.6
35-39	100.0	33.6	22.4	3.2	4.8	3.2	-	56.4	4.4	42.0	1.6	7.6	0.4	0.4	10.0
40-44	100.0	24.2	18.3	1.6	2.7	1.6	2.7	60.7	2.1	52.7	-	5.9	-	-	12.4
45-49	100.0	25.4	18.2	0.8	3.2	3.2	0.8	65.9	0.8	50.8	4.0	9.5	0.8	-	7.9
50-54	100.0	29.0	19.7	5.3	-	4.0	-	51.3	-	39.5	1.3	9.2	-	1.3	19.7
55-59	100.0	23.6	20.0	-	3.6	-	1.8	74.6	-	45.5	5.5	20.0	1.8	1.8	-
60-64	100.0	11.7	6.7	-	-	5.0	-	66.7	-	55.0	5.0	6.7	-	-	21.6
65 >	100.0	10.0	3.8	-	-	6.2	-	70.0	-	62.5	1.2	2.5	-	3.8	20.0

1 refer to the following reasons (1) to look for work, (2) to take a job, to change a job, (3) to transfer a job, and (4) to other job-related reasons.

2 refer to the following reasons (1) to change marital status, (2) to accompany person in household, (3) to return home, (4) to go to other residence, (5) to be ordained, and (6) other reasons.

Note : Data are upon requested.

Table 1 Percent migrants 5 years of age and over, by reasons for moving, age groups, sex and urban and rural regions. 1975-1980 (Contd.)

Age and Sex	Grand Total	Reasons for Moving to Rural Regions Between 1975-1980												Unknown	
		Economic Reasons ¹				Education Reason		Family Reasons ²							
		Total	1	2	3	4	Reason	Total	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Male															
5-9	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	4.8	87.5	-	81.3	2.4	-	-	3.8	7.7
10-14	100.0	6.9	6.1	0.5	0.2	0.1	12.2	75.2	0.4	67.6	2.1	0.2	3.6	1.3	5.7
15-19	100.0	29.4	24.3	0.9	4.0	0.2	7.1	56.0	6.6	39.5	2.6	0.6	6.3	0.4	7.5
20-24	100.0	36.6	21.3	1.0	13.9	0.4	2.0	55.5	30.4	17.7	2.4	0.6	4.0	0.4	5.9
25-29	100.0	41.8	27.0	2.0	11.8	1.0	0.5	53.1	32.3	14.6	2.6	2.2	0.8	0.6	4.6
30-34	100.0	55.3	37.9	2.1	13.4	1.9	0.2	40.1	18.3	10.7	5.6	3.8	1.1	0.6	4.4
35-39	100.0	63.3	45.3	3.9	12.5	1.6	0.3	31.2	12.8	8.0	4.8	4.1	0.9	0.6	5.2
40-44	100.0	66.3	48.8	2.9	12.3	2.3	0.4	27.3	7.6	6.4	7.8	3.3	1.4	0.8	6.0
45-49	100.0	73.1	59.0	3.7	7.0	3.4	-	25.1	6.7	2.8	7.3	3.1	3.4	1.8	1.8
50-54	100.0	65.5	50.9	3.0	10.3	1.3	-	31.1	5.6	3.9	6.5	8.6	3.5	3.0	3.4
55-59	100.0	68.5	51.0	1.3	12.8	3.4	-	25.5	2.0	5.4	6.7	4.7	5.4	1.3	6.0
60-64	100.0	40.8	35.8	1.7	-	3.3	-	46.7	1.7	13.4	8.3	8.3	11.7	3.3	12.5
65 >	100.0	32.9	30.8	1.4	-	0.7	-	56.7	1.4	18.2	9.1	6.3	16.8	4.9	10.4
Female															
5-9	100.0	-	-	-	-	-	3.2	89.1	-	83.8	2.6	-	-	2.7	7.7
10-14	100.0	12.8	11.1	0.6	0.2	0.9	5.4	77.0	0.5	73.6	2.7	0.1	-	0.1	4.8
15-19	100.0	23.6	21.0	1.3	0.9	0.4	4.1	66.8	16.3	46.8	3.0	0.3	0.2	0.2	5.5
20-24	100.0	21.9	15.3	0.8	5.7	0.1	0.8	72.1	25.1	44.4	2.0	0.3	0.1	0.2	5.2
25-29	100.0	23.3	15.8	1.3	5.6	0.6	0.4	72.3	15.2	52.8	3.3	0.8	-	0.2	4.0
30-34	100.0	23.9	18.2	1.7	3.5	0.5	0.3	72.1	8.6	57.3	5.1	0.6	0.2	0.3	3.7
35-39	100.0	26.6	22.6	1.9	1.5	0.6	0.2	68.5	4.9	57.0	5.1	1.1	0.4	-	4.7
40-44	100.0	25.9	21.3	1.7	0.6	2.3	-	70.3	2.9	60.3	4.4	1.5	-	1.2	3.8
45-49	100.0	26.7	23.5	0.8	0.8	1.6	-	69.4	3.9	56.1	5.1	2.7	0.8	0.8	3.9
50-54	100.0	35.0	28.8	3.1	-	3.1	-	60.1	3.1	46.7	6.1	1.8	1.2	1.2	4.9
55-59	100.0	21.9	17.4	-	0.7	3.8	-	72.8	1.5	57.6	6.1	2.3	1.5	3.8	5.3
60-64	100.0	15.2	13.9	1.3	-	-	1.3	72.2	-	48.1	10.1	5.1	1.3	7.6	11.3
65 >	100.0	14.9	12.3	-	1.3	1.3	-	79.3	-	61.0	8.5	3.9	3.3	2.6	5.8

1 refer to the following reasons (1) to look for work, (2) to take a job, to change a job, (3) to transfer a job, and (4) to other job-related reasons.

2 refer to the following reasons (1) to change marital status, (2) to accompany person in household, (3) to return home, (4) to go to other residence, (5) to be ordained, and (6) other reasons.

Note : Data are upon requested.

gradually declines by increase in age. Data indicate there is never more than 10 percent between ages 25 and 59 who give this reason. However, to accompany their household members to urban regions has increased in importance as a reason for male migrants aged 60 and over (15.8 percent between ages 60-64, and 41.5 percent between ages 65 and over). This probably reflects the migration of retired persons to accompany their family members to urban regions.

In general, the migration pattern of male migrants to urban regions may reflect the needs of younger male migrants to look for work and to study in urban regions. In addition, to accompany persons in their households to urban regions is significant for male migrants at their early as well as retired ages.

To accompany members in their households to urban regions has become an important family reason for female migrants. Data reveal that this reason is substantially becoming an important stimulation for migration of females of almost all age groups. Also, as revealed by the statistics in Table 1, only females state that their migration to urban regions was because of a change in their marital status which is a significant reason especially for those in age groups between 20 and 29.

In general, the migration pattern of female migrants to urban regions appears to reflect the needs of younger females to look for work and study in urban regions. Also, to accompany persons in their households is an important reason for female migrants in almost all age groups.

Among those who moved to rural regions between 1975-1980, young male migrants report that to accompany members in their households to rural regions was an important reason for them. This reason, however, declines as their ages increase up to 49 years old (2.8 percent). Then, it increases again to 18.2 percent among male migrants aged 65 and over. This probably reflects the migration of children with their parents as well as the migration of retired persons with their families.

Unlike migration to urban regions, changes in marital status has become an important family reason for migration to rural regions among male and female migrants. As data indicated, male migrants aged 20-29 (30.4 percent between ages 20-24, and 32.3 percent between ages 25-29) and a considerable percent of those aged 30-39 (18.3 percent between ages 30-34, and 12.8 percent between ages 35-39) move to rural regions because of changes in their marital status. To return home has become an important reason for moving to rural regions more than to urban regions. Overall, this migration pattern reflects family reasons for migrating which is much more important to stimulate male migrants to rural regions than for any other reason.

In general, the migration pattern of male mi-

grants to rural regions may reflect the needs of male migrants at their early and retired ages to accompany their family members to rural regions. Also, other family factors such as changing marital status, and returning home become important reasons for male migrants to move to rural regions. Interestingly enough "to look for work" in rural regions becomes the need of male migrants with their increasing ages.

Among female migrants moving to rural regions, to accompany members in their household is the reason an increasing percentage of female migrants of all ages give and they give this explanation more frequently than other reasons.

For changing their marital status, female migrants aged 15-29 express this reason more frequently than any other age group with their 25.1 percent as the highest percent for those aged 20-24. Also, returning home becomes a more important reason for female migrants moving to rural regions than for those moving to urban regions. This emphasizes the considerable importance of family factors over the economic reasons as the stimulation for females to move to rural regions.

In general, the migration pattern of female migrants to rural regions may reflect the needs of female migrants at all age groups to accompany their family members to rural regions. Also, other family factors such as changing marital status, and returning home become important factors for female migration to rural places. Interestingly the percent of female migrants looking for work in rural regions increases as their age increases.

Family Influences on Rural and Urban Migration in Thailand

The family is the base for social organization in Thailand. It commands the individual's primary norms and values. The rural Thai family in particular exhibits the characteristic type of family pattern in this nation. The basic socioeconomic unit in the rural Thai family is the nuclear family comparable to that in the United States. It consists of a father, mother, children, and perhaps one or more grandparents and relatives living in the same house. At times the rural household may become a temporary extended family which includes a son or daughter with his or her spouse and children living in the same house of their parents. Thai family members are primarily socialized to respect age-mates and cousins.

The influences of family patterns, without doubt, tremendously affect the attitudes and decision-making of family members. Decisions for migration such as changing marital status, accompanying persons in household, returning home, being ordained, among others reflect the impact of family norms and values on Thai people. In each step of individual life cycle, children stay entirely with their families. Therefore, a

reason given by young migrants that they accompany family members in their households to either rural or urban regions is understood. Children, of course, are taught to be permissive, carefree, gentle, and have respect for the elders. Adolescents are prepared to assume adult work and responsibilities after ending the required primary courses or reaching 15 years old. Thereafter, some of them may move to urban places to look for work as indicated by young male and female migrants. Also, those who can afford further education would rather move to urban places for continuing their higher education. This is because urban schools are much superior to those schools in rural localities in terms of physical facilities and teaching staff. In addition, along with the preparation for adult responsibilities, adolescent sons who decide to become a novice or monk will be encouraged by their family members since they will bring merit to the family. This value corresponds well with being ordained particularly as a reason for young male migrants moving to rural areas. The choice of residence and composition of households of young couples will also reflect Thai family patterns. As illustrated, the husband may move to stay with his wife and her parents or vis-a-versa. Some families may even include close relatives in their families. Couples are expected to repay their parents for bringing them into the world by taking care of them until their death. These norms and values clearly explain the phenomena of a large number of retired people accompanying their family members as their reason for migration. Furthermore, female migrants at almost all age groups indicate accompanying persons in their households as their reason for migration. This may reflect that they might belong to one component of the family.

In short, the analyses of Thai family patterns will be helpful in explaining and understanding the influence of family factors as reasons for migration of males and females in Thailand.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the 1980 Thai Population and Housing Census data, the most frequently given reason indicated by children, women, and old adults is to accompany their family members. These research

findings reveal that in the very near future Day-Care Centers for the young should be widely implemented to decrease the burden of housewives. They, on the other hand, should be trained in such fields as handicraft, on the job training, farming production, and appropriate technology which meet the domestic and public demands. By doing so, there will be extra incomes to make ends meet for families.

Further Research

In Thailand, family patterns influence the behavior, attitudes, and decision-making of family members. Such decisions as reasons for migration clearly reveal norms and values inherited in Thai families. Further studies are, therefore, encouraged to include family patterns among the characteristics for explanation of migration streams in Thailand as well as other developing countries.

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