FRAMING POLITICAL IDEOLOGIES IN PAKISTANI TALK SHOWS: A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF ARY VS. GEO NEWS

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ABSTRACT
This research explores the presentation of political ideologies in Pakistani television news through a discourse analysis of two television news programmes from Pakistan; ARY News and Geo News. The study examines how the political talk shows construct, reinforce, or contest political ideologies linguistically and visually. Informed by CDA and framing theory, data is taken from episodes of ARY's 'Off the Record' and Geo's 'Capital Talk', recorded in January to March 2024. These ads also exhibit ideological bias, language and agenda-setting that support polarization. The results emphasize the media's influence in forming public perception and maintaining ideological rifts in Pakistan's socio-political terrain.
Keywords: Political discourse, media framing, ARY News, Geo News, Pakistan, Critical Discourse Analysis, ideological bias

1. INTRODUCTION
The role of the mass media in forming public opinion and shaping political ideology in recent years has been a subject of great interest to scholars, especially in emerging democracies such as Pakistan. In particular, TV talk shows have become a potent force for political communication, serving a dual purpose as news informant and political reality framer. Of all the news television channels in Pakistan ARY News and Geo News have achieved high viewership not just for their outreach but also for their assumed political and ideological affiliations (Riaz & Sahar Bukhari, 2023). This paper examines how these two powerful news networks frame political ideologies in their talk shows, concentrating on discursive strategies, narrative construction, and ideological positioning.

Framing theory offers a key to analyzing the mechanisms by which the media give prominence to one aspect of political occurrences and obscures another, thereby affecting public perceptions and policy agendas (Entman, 1993). In a politically divided climate such as Pakistan, the media is often seen as a vehicle for advancing the agenda of certain political parties or individuals instead of playing the role of a neutral site for public discourse (Khalid & Akbar, 2023). As a result, the viewing public is regularly treated to ideologically skewed analysis of political events, potentially entrenching preconceived notions and exacerbating political polarization.

That has included ARY News and Geo News. ARY is usually thought to be pro-Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), particularly since the party led by Imran Khan, whereas Geo News is seen as more anti-PTI and sympathetic to other parties such as the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) (Jamil, 2021). This ideological split is reflected in the stations' talk show formats, choice of subject matter, guests and political narratives. For instance, the exact same political event can be presented from entirely distinctive emphases and modes of rhetoric depending upon the channel's editorial position.

The analysis is confined to the discourse of televised political talk shows, particularly "Off the Record" (ARY) and "Capital Talk" (Geo), both of which are popular platforms in steering the political discourse and influencing public opinion. These programmes do not just transmit information, but they act as a site for the construction of ideological meaning through text, visuals and narrative framing (Shabbir & Mahmood 2022). By analyzing a series of selected episodes from both networks, thus comparing and contrasting their discourses, this research aims to unveil the ideological orientations and communicative strategies for the construction of political ideologies.

With the nature of high political risks, mounting media polarization and growing influence of the television news medium in Pakistan, this research is theoretically and practically relevant. It adds to the corpus of scholarly work on media discourse and political communication in South Asia and provides insights into the ways in which media framing shapes democratic processes, public trust, and political engagement.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are to:

1. To investigate how ARY and Geo News represent political ideologies in the political talk shows.

2. To trace/reveal the discursive and linguistic mechanism employed by ARY and Geo News to make up and break image of PTI and its political rivals.

3. To delve into how each news network discursively constructs narratives on issues related to nationalism, religion, and populism through their political talk shows.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study aims to answer these questions:

1. How do ARY and Geo News compare in terms of the framing of political ideologies on their political talk shows?

2. What are the discursive and linguistic tactics used to build up or tear down the image of PTI and its rivals in politics?

3. How are the issues of nationalism, religion and populism discursively constructed by each channel?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The importance of this study rests in its consideration of media discourse and political ideology in a rapidly changing and politically contested environment. As a nation with a history of military coups, weak democratic traditions, and shifting degrees of media freedoms, Pakistan offers an interesting case for exploring how political narratives are framed and disputed in the context of mass media (Yousaf & Shah, 2022). In these circumstances, media are a disproportionately influential conduit for political conversation, often serving as appendages of party machinery as much as they do as impartial informers.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This inquiry is theoretically grounded in three related bodies of work: Framing Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and Agenda-Setting Theory.

The Framing Theory (Entman, 1993) [3] is based on the belief that coverage of an issue will always be selective – to frame is to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. In the context of political talk shows, then, framing can shape who is considered legitimate or corrupt, competent or incompetent, patriotic or traitorous among political actors.

CDA (Fairclough, 1995) is used to reveal the power relations, ideological structures and hegemonic forces reflected in the media linguistic choice. This view of discourse as social practice which shapes and is shaped by power relations is adopted in CDA. And this leaves it ideally suited for examining the ways in which news channels reproduce or interrogate hegemonic political ideologies.

Agenda-Setting Theory (McCombs & Shaw 1972) complements the previous theories, highlighting the power of media in shaping the issue salience for politics. Although not every medium can tell an audience what to think, they are very successful at telling the audience what to think about. This is especially important in a media that some topics are discussed heavily while others are consistently deprioritized.

Taken together, these theoretical perspectives offer a multilevel framework for examining how political ideologies are produced, challenged, and disseminated in televised talk shows.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Media, Politics, and Ideological Framing

The relationship between the media and politics on the agenda of the academy is very old, especially in relation to how the media in frames political ideologies and affects public opinion. The concept of frame, initially introduced by Goffman (1974) and further developed by Entman (1993), offers an analytic approach that captures the manner in which media coverage highlights preferential reality constructions in guiding interpretations. Entman (1993) describes framing as the process that works to "select some aspects of a perceived reality and makes them more salient in a communicating text." This is particularly acute in politically divided societies, in which media channels often serve as ideological brokers rather than politically unbiased transmitters of news.

In new democracies, such as Pakistan, where institutional trust is weak and the state system is in a state of constant flux, media narrative is an influential factor shaping the public mind (Shah, 2020). As Shojaei, Youssefi and Hosseini (2013) has noted: media discourse is not simply descriptive, but also performative, it can help construct the political landscape by producing the meanings that underpin positions for or against a particular ideologies.

2.2 Framing in Talk Shows:

Television talk shows are among the most compelling source of political communication specially due to its popularity, immediacy and reach (Riaz & Bukhari, 2023). These programmes enable journalists, political commentators and politicians to shape their opinions and frame stories about political affairs. Studies in several landscapes have shown that discursive man oeuvres employed by televises can reinforce hegemonic ideological discourses,

create a divide amongst audiences along ideological lines and influence broader political narratives (Van Dijk, 2006; Ekström & Kroon, 2011).

In the Pakistani context, political talk shows like Off the Record (ARY News) and Capital Talk (Geo News) don't simply report, they translate, rank, and often sensationalize political events. Akhtar and Khalid (2022) contend that these talk shows are not mere channels of reporting but strategically frame events to correlate with certain ideological standpoints. EMMA WESTLUND Programme topics, emotional language and selective guest inclusion are some of the commonly employed strategies mediating perceptions of audiences.

2.3 Media Ownership and Politics in Pakistan

To understand media framing in Pakistan, one must take into account the political economy of media ownership. As reported by Ali (2021), the media environment in Pakistan is dominated by a complex array of ownership patterns, political alignments, and state control. As of Imran Khan's leadership, ARY Digital Network is often considered to be pro-PTI with Geo News presumed to be critical of PTI and in a bias towards PML-N (Jamil, 2021).

Pakistan's media houses are the mouthpieces for political ideologies. This alignment expresses itself in obvious and then not so obvious manners – whether through the style of programming that favours language that's consistently partisan, warmed-over homilies to guests of a particular political stripe and the editorial stance. Media in Pakistan, as Iqbal and Amin (2020) point out, is "not only a site of struggle for ideological hegemony but also a space where political loyalties and oppositions are produced and legitimized."

These alliances feed what is referred to as media polarization: the fact that citizens consider news channels less as disinterested format that presents the news and more as 'political actors with an interest' (Khalid & Akbar, 2023). This polarization becomes further dangerous in places like Pakistan where a vast chunk of the population consumes electronic media and nothing else for politics news and analysis.

2.4 Framing and Discourse Analysis

The critical approach to media language Proposed by Fairclough (1995) and followed by Van Dijk (1998), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a solid framework for examining the political ideological character of media language. CDA posits that language is not a neutral channel but a means for expressing and perpetuating power relations. It seeks to understand the ways in which discursive practices maintain or destabilize social hierarchies.

Van Dijk's (2006) socio-cognitive model emphasizes the importance of mental models, shared knowledge and situational cues in the processing and understanding of discourse. The use of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation as discourse strategies in partisan media: An assessment of audience reinforcement motivations.

In Pakistan, these are evident especially in the domain of talk shows. Shabbir and Mahmood (2022) argue that ARY talk shows, for instance, generally present PTI in a favorable light by employing techniques of legitimization via expert testimony and repetition of nationalist themes. Alternatively, when reporting on PTI, Geo News might frame PTI as related to governance failure, political instability or human rights, which are indicators consistent with a negative orientation.

2.5 Ideological Framings: Nationalism, Religion and Populism

Nationalism, religion and populism are deeply entwined political ideologies in Pakistan. These common places often emerge in media debates, particularly in periods of political crises,

elections and/or war interventions. Nationalism in Pakistani Media is Clubbed on Exclusion, focusing on threats by the outsider (India) or the insider (opposition parties) (Ahmed, 2021). Another important frame in political speech-making is the religious identity. Political and media rhetoric often uses Islamic references as a way of securing a moral high-ground and legitimizing their objectives while doing so through cultural tropes. [1] Found that religious metaphor and Islamic values are commonly utilised on television to frame ones political opponents as faithful or disloyal to the country's as Islamic aura.

Populism, of course, is a major factor as well. Media framing in Pakistan features populist narratives such as "anti-elite," "the will of the people" and "us vs. them." These frames were particularly prevalent at the time of Imran's rise to power when PTI's narrative was based on anti-corruption and anti-status quo discourses. It was ARY News that played a lead role in promoting this populist discourse, emerging as a savior to the laid back of the country (Yousaf & Shah, 2022).

2.6 Media Bias and Perception by Audience

Biased media framing has serious implications. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the way the issues are framed can have a large impact on the lay public's perception of political reality. Media do not tell people what to think but what to think about, that is, if an issue is a salient problem in the media (McCombs and Shaw 1972), a concept called agenda-setting.

This is even more so the case in Pakistan, where the degrees of media exposure are particularly high and the level of political literacy is relatively low. According to Ahmed and Zahid (2023), Pakistani media audience lacks the critical literacy to discern bias or to judge whether a source is credible or not. Hence, talk show ideological framing may potentially influence how people vote, trust institutions, and even interrelate with one another.

Additionally, work by Riaz and Bukhari (2023) demonstrate how partisan framing leads to echo chambers – where audiences are more likely to be repeatedly exposed only to like-minded people, in turn maintaining and reducing their dissonance with their beliefs, and level of exposure of their beliefs to opposing ones. Not only does this polarize public opinion, but it undercuts democratic deliberation.

2.7 Comparative Media Studies: ARY and Geo News

Comparative discourse analysis of ARY and Geo News demonstrates glaring distinctions in terms of frames, theme and language. Jamil (2021) observes that ARY's talk shows use both nationalistic and pro-establishment discourses, and in doing so, they utilize rhetorical questions, emotional appeals and symbolic cues to reinforce PTI narratives. By contrast Geo News takes a more critical and investigative approach, often questioning the lack of institutions and judicial problems as well as civil liberties.

The contrasts are visual and performative as well. The language of anchors, positioning of political guests, and the use of background visuals may be used as framing devices that support an ideological slant (Akhtar & Khalid, 2022). These are not neutral elements; they lead audience interpretation and emotion in a sneaky way.

Justify/Bol sovereign-promoted government [sic] in managing COVID-19: conditions for media freedom 191 ARTICLE 44 In a comparative analysis, it was concluded from the analysis in the preceding paragraphs that "The ARY framed PTI governance during COVID-19 as competent, responsible and preventive while Geo news frames it as failed to delivery to healthcare and

economy" (Khalid and Akber, 2023). These divergent frames didn't just shape how publics made sense of the crisis; they also affected people's confidence in governmental institutions.

The above reviewed literature establishes a strong ground for a study on framing of political ideologies in Pakistani talk shows. Available studies affirm that the media industry in Pakistan id ideologically splintered where channels such as ARY and Geo are frequently supports of conflicting political fiefdoms. Talk shows provide a valuable channel for the dissemination of ideologies, and they use a variety of discourse strategies to construct political actors and events. However, despite the proliferation of studies, little has been undertaken that has systematically compared the ideological framing practices of ARY and Geo with one another using a discourse-analytical method. This void is marked when we place the media within the context of public opinion and democracy. Through examining the language and discursive strategies employed in political talk shows of both the channels, this study intends to make a fresh contribution to our understanding of the ideological role played by the Pakistani media.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study follows a qualitative research method and more precisely implements Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyze the framing of political ideologies in televised talk shows on ARY News and Geo News. The primary focus of this study is on the linguistic and discursive moves and strategies used by these channels to represent the political leanings of important political parties -PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) and its challengers. It also considers how nationalism, populism and religious identity are enshrined and projected in televised talk. To achieve these purposes, the research therefore asks the following QUESTIONS (1) What are the differences between ARY and Geo News in terms of framing political ideology in PTCs? (2) Which are the discursive and linguistic strategies of constructing and/or deconstructing the image of PTI and its political opponents? (3) How are themes of nationalism, religion and populism discursively constructed on both channels?

For data collection, the research picked up eight episodes (four from each channel) of two most popular political talk shows; Off the Record (ARY News) and Capital Talk (Geo News) aired during January to April 2025, a politically charged time due to the national protests and party reshuffling. Following videos were selected where they discussed the latest political developments relating to PTI, PML-N, JUI-F, military establishment. Manual transcripts of these talk shows were prepared and were checked for accuracy. Our selection was designed to provide a balanced mix of hosts, political guests and themes. Content was analyzed within Van Dijk's (2006) socio-cognitive CDA approach considering ideological square strategies such as positive self-representation, negative other-representation, presuppositions, lexical choices, and intertextual references. This theoretical approach has provided a subtle way to grasp the ideological functions of language in media discourse.

The focus of the analysis was on detailed textual analysis and thematic coding with the assistance of the NVivo tool to locate recurring patterns and ideological tropes, as well as to identify rhetorical strategies. For validity and reliability, triangulation was established by comparing linguistic results with visual aspects and the selection of guests. Investigators also noted the significance of anchors: question style and emotion within also drove the ideological framing. The method provides not only a way to investigate the research questions, but also a way to unpack how talk shows appear as sites for the production of ideology and political

mediation within Pakistan. This CDA-informed, live media-engagement method helps us understand how media is shaping and polarizing public political discourses in Pakistan.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

This section offers an in-depth analysis of the political talk shows i.e. being aired on ARY News and Geo News. Applying Van Dijk's (2006) soccio-cognitive model of Critical Discourse Analysis, the transcripts of a sample of talk shows were analysed for ideological framing strategies including lexicalisation, presupposition, polarization and intertextuality. Nationalism, religious identity, populism and anti-elitism were the dominant frames, in line with the ideological leanings of the two channels.

4.1 Lexical Choices and Ideological Labeling

Perhaps the most prominent feature of the analysis was the adoption of loaded and ideologically laden language. The way ARY News was putting things, You can already guess that PTI was being described in all possible good adjectives and verbs, the "visionary party", "honest leadership" and yes the "savior of the nation". And their opponents such as PML-N and JUI-F were characterised with a negative connotation in terms such as corrupt, status quo or self-serving. Geo News among other thing used to portray PTI leadership as "controversial", "polarizing" or "inexperienced", while they use the term "experienced politicians" or "seasoned leaders" for their political opponents.

Table 1: Lexical Choices in Talk Shows

Channel	Positive Lexicon for PTI	Negative Lexicon for PTI	Positive Lexicon for Opponents	Negative Lexicon for Opponents
ARY News	Visionary, brave, honest	N/A	N/A	Corrupt, self-interested
Geo News	N/A	Polarizing, inexperienced	Experienced, seasoned	N/A

4.2 Framing of Nationalism

Nationalistic rhetoric was a common thread on the two networks, but was presented in different way. Nationalism was often presented as a PTI story and the party as a protector of national sovereignty and self-respect by ARY News. That was clear in foreign conspiracies, economic self-sufficiency, and institutional oversight. Geo News, though still in nationalistic terms, saw it more in institutional and democratic dimensions- promising stability, parliamentary supremacy, the judiciary.

Table 2: Nationalism Framing

Channel	Nationalism Indicators	Discursive Strategies Used
ARY News	Sovereignty, foreign conspiracy, pride	Repetition, metaphor, emphasis
Geo News	Stability, democracy, rule of law	Historical analogy, legitimization

4.3 Construction of Religious Identity

Religious metaphors were used to authenticate political stories. Religious language ARY News' also resorted to religious idioms and Qur'anic verses to enhance the PTI's moral space particularly in relation to accountability and justice. Geo News was less secular but also

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intermittently appealed to a religious identity in relation to JUI-F. This contradiction illuminates the tactical deployment of religion in media discourses on inclusion and exclusion.

Table 3: Religious Identity Markers

Channel	Religious Elements in Discourse	Associated Political Actors
ARY News	Quranic references, Islamic justice, piety	PTI
Geo News	Religious authority, clergy, traditionalism	JUI-F

4.4 Host Bias and Question Framing
The talk show hosts played an interesting ideational role. On ARY News, anchors would frequently put leading questions which would support PTI's narrative and ask the opposition tough questions. However, the Geo News anchors seemed more critical of the PTI and more open to accommodating opposition voices. That difference is reflective of the political leaning of each channel and thereby affects public opinion.

Table 4: Host Questioning Patterns

Channel	Type of Questions to PTI Guests	Type of Questions to Opposition Guests
ARY News	Supportive, affirming	Confrontational, accusatory
Geo News	Critical, probing	Respectful, legitimizing

4.5 Visual and Non-verbal Cues
On-screen graphics, tickers, and position of guest seating also factored into ideological framing. The ARY News further supplemented the pro-PTI sentiment with high decibel, colourful visuals, national symbols and patriotic music. Geo News instead applied subdued colors and formal delivery but not dramatic visuals to convey a somewhat rational and democratic organization. These silent contributions, however, were crucial for the making of the audience's perceptions.

Summary of Key Findings:
   i.   Framed PTI in celebratory, positive nationalist and religious terms and delegitimised opposition: ARY News.
   ii. Geo News took on a more even-handed, but institutionally supportive approach favouring democracy and the rule of law.
   iii. Hosts, imagery and religious talk were employed in forming ideological accounts.

This post explains how Pakistani talk shows operate not just as sites of political discussion, but as spaces of ideological production and circulation, often shaping public opinions in coded ways, casting opinions along partisan lines.

5. DISCUSSION
The results of this study provide valuable information about the influence of televised media on shaping political ideology in Pakistan. The juxtaposition of ARY to Geo News is a stark one and not so much on the basis of political alignment as on language and narrative forwarding. This supports Fairclough's (1995) claim that media discourse is a form of social practice through which power is exercised and ideologies become naturalized.

The key word choices in the analysis are consonant with the ideological square (Van Dijk, 2006) that centers on the positive self-image and negative other-view tactic. PTI leaders were lionized by ARY News and the opponent's legitimacy was taken away, a result which was also in

confirming to the finding of Qureshi and Shah (2022) that pro-government media idealize ruling party whereas they represented opposition as regressive. On the other hand, Geo News was critical of PTI while using qualifying words, specifically "seasoned" and "experienced," for other parties such as PML-N and JUI-F. These findings are similar to previous researches (e.g., Ahmed, 2021), reiterating the polarised tendency of Pakistani news media, with political leanings manifesting through the language and metaphors used.

The construction of nationalism also reflects worldwide trends within right-wing populist media strategies, in which appeals to sovereignty, patriotism and anti-foreign sentiments work to build and reinforce an existing base of support (Wodak, 2015). ARY News reflected this when it used nationalism on behalf of the PTI after depicting them as the first line of defence against foreign conspiracies. This is in contrast to the institutional framing of nationalism by Geo News—of privileging the constitutional order and the rule of law—that resonates with democratic discourses—if we recall the analysis ofLodhi & Javed (2020)—instead. This division only reinforces the ideological divide in Pakistan's media.

Religion as a badge of identity is a second significant aspect of this discourse. The employment of religious symbolism by ARY for PTI's moral ascendancy is consistent with Zubair & Khan's (2019) findings that political leaders in Pakistan actively use Islamic metaphors to seek legitimacy. The religious leitmotif in Geo News was of a different nature and inextricably intertwined with the JUI-F, revealing that religious identity is selectively deployed depending on the political context and the media audience. This further indicates that religious discourse is instrumentalized here as a strong source of media framing, which is also justified by Rahman's (2023) interpretation of how media develops religio-political ideologies.

Support is further bolstered by host questioning style analysis demonstrating how subtle ideological alignment can be achieved. Whereas ARY allowed PTI a platform to reinforce PTI's narrative through affirming and uncritical questioning, Geo News's hosts used more antagonistic and questioning approach while engaging PTI. These trends are consistent with Shamsi (2021), who suggests that anchors in Pakistan serve as ideological gatekeepers, shaping discussions by means of question framing in their shows as well as the guest invitation. The role of the host becomes particularly vital in talk show programming, because talk shows have a dialogic structure in which framing through tone, turn-taking, and selective interruption is crucial.

Similarly non-verbal cues, through visuals, background music and graphic design, were found to be part of ideological framing. Although these cues might appear peripheral, they play an important role in the construction of audience viewpoint, in line with Kress and van Leeuwen (2006)'s scheme explaining that multimodal texts function as ideological artefacts. The vivid and emotive patriotic iconography employed by ARY News enhances the emotional appeal of nationalism, while Geo News' stodgy institutional aesthetics reinforce its claim to objectivity and institutional respectability.

On the whole, the results strongly corroborate the research on political communication and media partisanship in Pakistan. ARY as well as Geo News are both ideological state apparatuses which take what supports their political overlords. It is as much an instrument of social control as it is of political bias, capturing public speech with its repeated use of language and visualise it and symbolism. The study adds to the on-going arguments about media ethics, democracy, and

the importance of discourse among the political communicators, especially in hybrid regimes as Pakistan happens to be, where media is free and at the same time fiercely partisan.

6. CONCLUSION

The question I ask is how political ideologies are constructed in the Pakistani TV talk shows on ARY and Geo News which illustrate the channels each with particular political alignments. CDA found that both channels use a variety of linguistic, visual and interactional devices to create and disseminate competing political storylines. ary news always portray pti positive image by using nationalist and religious self-righteous narratives and at the same time discredit the opposition through name calling. On the other hand, Geo News is more critical of PTI, adopting the tone of democratic and institutional discourses of stability and rule of law and often presents the position of the oppositions quite favourably.

It underscores the significance of media as an ideological state apparatus -a media that is not just a mirror image, but also an actor that frames political perceptions and influence public opinion in Pakistan's battle-ground media. Talk show hosts, by posing questions and selectively engaging, serve as gatekeepers that enhance partisan bias. Besides, non-linguistic elements like visual component and background music also make subtle yet powerful contribution to the whole ideological formation.

These results highlight the wider implications of media partisanship for democratic discourse and political accountability. Media diversity is essential to the functioning of a healthy democracy, yet narrowing perspectives and partisan framing in the country's TV news channels impede objective political discussion. It would also be interesting for further research in this area to widen this analysis and engagement with the media and audience reception beyond even further divisions in media as to what this framing means for society.

More broadly, the article seeks to add to the applied knowledge of political communication in Pakistan by demonstrating how discourse in televised talk shows functions as a struggle terrain where power, ideology, and identity is played and contested.

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