New Forms of Violence in the Garden: tourism after tourism

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Abstract

In a world mainly marked by terrorism and the anxieties of a new pandemic (like COVID-19), the present book chapter has critically interrogated further on the changes and challenges posed over mankind in what experts dubbed as the virocene. The chapter explores the differences and commonalities between 9/11 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Although extensive literature has been populated over the recent decades, little attention has been given to the interplay between the bio-power and the disciplinary mechanism of control exerted by states during the War on Terror and the COVID-19 pandemic. This suggests a more than interesting question, may we imagine or plan a safer future through the introduction of preemptive methods? It is important to discuss part of the problems formulated by the net of experts during the War on Terror and the Pandemic have been never concretized as originally reported. The chapter explores not only the impacts of COVID-19 on travel behavior but also how the precautionary doctrine constructed the theory of living with the enemy within. Far from being antithetical events, the COVID-19 pandemic –as a simulacrum- reaffirms a logic installed by the War on Terror. The war on terror was fundamentally replaced by a war against a virus. At this stage, the stranger (tourist) becomes an undesired guest. This assumption means that Western hospitality is facing a serious (if not unparalleled) crisis that needs to be investigated in the next research.

Key Words: Precautionary Principle, Civil Rights, Homeland Security, War on Terror, 9/11, Tourism, COVID-19 pandemic.

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Introduction

The turn of the twentieth century has brought unparalleled changes and challenges for liberal democracies (Crelinsten, 1998; Chalk, 1998). Without any doubt, terrorism seems to be one of the major challenges posed by Western democracies. To some extent, the levels of chronic terrorism rest as a result of political intervention headed by democratic countries that unilaterally infer in other nations, or because of the proliferation of poor democracies (Chenoweth, 2013; Andersen & Brym 2017). The problems of liberal democracy in to struggle against international terrorism have been illustrated in two main constellations. At a closer look, liberal reasoning educates citizens to obey certain duties and rules while keeping them unnoticed in international political affairs abroad. As a result of this, lay people believe that they are good citizens because they pay taxes, vote, or even deliver their children to school; but they never question the role of their government beyond the national frontiers. Secondly, liberal democracy –unlike totalitarian regimes- should follow certain protocols in the struggle against terrorism. The protocols should be strictly adjusted to the law and the constitution (Stilz 2009; Korstanje 2018). The opposite is equally true, the free press as well as the media are particularly captivated by terrorism-based news creating a state of emergency that paradoxically hurts democracy. It seems like terrorism looks to exploit media exposure (media airwave) and the liberty to consume it as its main source of oxygen (Eid, 2014). The point has been widely illustrated by studies focusing on the effects of fear in democracy (Altheide 2022), the mass media fear packaging campaign (Howie 2012), the demonization of the "non-Western Other" (Korstanje, 2018), the climate of islamophobia (Rives-East, 2019) or even the human right violation in the so-called War on Terror (Achcar, 2015). However, less attention was mainly given to the radical transformation of post-modern terrorism in the literature or what Lisa Stampnitzky (2013) called the demonization of terrorism. Per her viewpoint, classic terrorism was associated with dirty wars, a type of political subversion between a small and a big fish. The recent introduction of moralistic rhetoric depicts terrorism as the manifestation of evil-doers or the action of filled hatred maniacs. What is more important, this book chapter goes beyond discussing the commonalities between postmodern terrorism and bio-politics during the COVID-19 pandemic. Both phenomena are part of the same tendency that appeared at the turn of the century.

Classic and New Terrorism

With the benefits of perspective, classic terrorism targeted violence or bombing against important persons, including Police officers, celebrities, authorities, or even members of the nobility (Feldman 1997). These acts have been based on separatism and subversion (Feldman 2008). Some of these attacks have been framed as a part of a separatist movement centered on the successive proclaims of certain (imagined or real) territory. This classic terrorism was originally associated (at least by experts) with failed states, or undemocratic regimes where political instability remains (Finchelstein, 2014). Western democracy was considered a natural political vaccine against terrorism. Example of this includes the bloody repression in Latin America during the 70s decade or the violence perpetrated in Africa during the 80s decade (Smith & Roberts, 2008). The expansion of the global capitalist system as well as the introduction of new discipline methods have invariably resulted in more abstract forms of terror marked by mass media exposure, higher levels of anxiety, and 4.0 society (Korstanje 2018; Howie 2012). Having said this, some authors speak to us of postmodern forms of terrorism where the political demands are abstract or almost impossible to meet. For the sake of clarity, parts of these demands ask for the "end of Western civilization" or the end of capitalism (Laqueur 2020). Unlike classic terrorism, postmodern terrorism not only operates in the domains of a hyper-connected society but also targets innocent civilians such as tourists or journalists (Grimshaw, 2006; Enders & Sandler, 2011). The spread of terror, as the main valid method, needs media exposure to prosper. In this way, the decapitation or the bombing is forecast, packaged, and disseminated by the media in minutes while captivating a broader global audience. Post-modern terrorism revives anyway long-dormant geopolitical tensions between neighboring countries. For lay citizens, nobody is safe anywhere or anytime (Sandler, 2011; Howie 2012). All citizens can be potential terrorists or potential targets of terrorism. As Noam Chomsky (1987; 2015) puts it, postmodern terrorism is also articulated through the creation of a dark spectacle for citizens to accept a neoliberal program that otherwise would be rejected. This happens because postmodern terrorism is legitimated by the power of discipline given by bio-politics.

The power of discipline

The terms discipline and bio-politics have been extensively used by French philosopher and historian Michel Foucault. At a closer look, Foucault holds the thesis that bio-politics is explained by the use of discipline to regulate (control) the population through bio-power. The application of this bio-power is done in all aspects of human life. For the current literature, bio-politics is often compared to *a style of government.* The influence of discipline is determined by the economic principle of scarcity that gives value to the produced commodity; likewise, the system deals with external (imagined) risks to legitimate the internal order. To put this bluntly, Foucault compares the external dangers to a virus that may decimate the population. This virus is inoculated and mitigated through the invention of the vaccine. The risk should be seen as an inoculated danger dispossessed from all its destructive capacity. At the same time, the risk –like the vaccine- makes external dangers more tolerable for social imaginary. The regulation of territory, economy, and bio-power are inextricably intertwined (Foucault 2003; 2016). By this, Kaushik Sunder Ranjan (2006) laments biopolitics as the invention of Nazism. For this ideology, the invention of life is needed from mass (death). The salvation of a few is successfully achieved through the destruction of the rest. Biopolitics looks to expand (eternal) life by the imposition of a bio-discipline oriented to domesticate the body; however this bio-discipline –which is interlinked to a bio-capital- seems to be far from being exact. It is based on a combination of abstract jargon discourse and statistics. The risk is an inference orchestrated to discipline the body. He puts the example of diabetes as well as many other medical risks which are inventions that sometimes do not take place as they have been medically inferred. The figure of risk rests on a false probabilism conditioned by the medical discourse. In the grim days of COVID-19, a new virus outbreak originally reported in Wuhan, China that ultimately killed millions of persons, the medical discourse –supported by the bio-power- played a leading role in marking not only the difference between death and life, but also the health protocols to say who is able or not to move (Tzanelli 2021; Rafele, Scribano & Korstanje, 2022). During the pandemic, the medical discourse conditioned and manipulated ideologically human emotions while the political power directed its anger against the Chinese government because of implicit censorship to stop the virus contagion (Scribano, 2021). The health protocols engendered devastating consequences for the daily lives of citizens and countries that transformed international geopolitics. The negative effects included the multiplication of riots and ethnic disputes, the rise of

new or old geopolitical tensions among nations, discrimination directed by foreign tourists –Asian tourists preferably- or against local ethnic minorities, the transformation of travel behavior, as well as the unification of autocratic discourses oriented to undermine the check and balance power of liberal democracy (Korstanje & George 2021). Without any doubt, the COVID-19-related protocols emulated the counter-terrorism policies that emanated during the War on Terror. As long as the days the lockdown was put into effect, an invisible virus was the terrorist that threatened the public order, so to speak, a lethal enemy that should be eradicated (Korstanje & George 2021; Caron 2024). Doubtless, COVID-19 divided the world in two, the western cultures enrooted in long-dormant euro centrism, and Asian nations (above all China) depicted as filthy, chaotic, and deprived of the necessary health conditions to prevent the next lethal pandemic in the future (Ye & Korstanje 2023; Altheide 2022). By this token, the medical discourse set the pace in setting the international agenda of governments, as well as the itinerary of their citizens. In the name of bio-security, the so-called net of experts imposed (disciplinary) the strictest restrictions that changed daily life as never before. Free citizens, from one day to another, felt impeded from moving –as the constitution grants- while in some cases, people died isolated without contact with loved relatives (Nelson-Becker & Victor, 2020; Schloesser et al, 2021). Most plausibly, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were nefarious for public health, including the triplication of mental diseases, and the increase in suicide rates, without mentioning the higher levels of anxiety and panic population experienced during the quarantine. Programming included daily hour-long news reporting how many people have been infected, recovered, and died because of COVID-19 (Lisdero & Fonrouge, 2021). This programming seems to be a real post-battle debriefing. In the name of biosecurity and health, the medical discourse emulated the allegories of war exacerbated by the War on Terror. This point will be discussed in the next section, when I discuss critically the commonalities and differences between terrorism (even the War On Terror) and COVID-19 (Ackerman & Peterson, 2020; Korstanje & George 2021; Lee & Haupt 2021). In next, I shall discuss how both, terrorism and the pandemic have changed our established travel behavior as never before.

Terrorism and COVID-19: its effects in the Spirit of Hospitality

Doubtless, the tourism industry has faced a radical expansion since the twentieth century because of combination of factors, mainly associated to the introduction of new technologies and the re-organization of postmodern working conditions in the Global North. Faster travels as well as more leisure time derived from a new re-organization of labor relationships. From its outset, the sociology of tourism has historically focused on the intriguing dialectics of what is real and staged. In fact, this academic stance seems to be a legacy left by French philosophy which over the years interrogated the interplay between reality and representation. From this point departs interesting studies published in the past such as MacCannell (1976); Sheller (2004), Korstanje (2018), and Bianchi (2018) –only to name a few of them-.

As Rodanthi Tzanelli (2023) puts it, there is a new Spirit of Hospitality which needs to be deciphered. This stage is mainly marked by the digitalization of daily relationships. The paradoxes of mobilities have been eradicated the original conditions that ultimately gave birth to the tourism industry. She also coins the term, techno-anthropocene to denote the interplay between the organizational design and technocracy. Humans not only move but also intervene in the nature through the application of technology. Technology engenders new forms of host-guest´s relationships centered on fear and mistrust. What is more important, the tourist apparatuses reproduce not only new forms of violence but also the subject they intend to govern. The rupture with the classic tourism epistemology, which is centered on a new labor division, leads to the current crisis of hospitality today. At the same time, modern tourism rests in a fallacy, overlooked by theorists and scholars. While modern nation-states encourage tourism as a form of valid development, they overlook the effects of their programs which include the intensification of ethnic conflict as well as the eradication of ethnic differences in tourist territories. Most plausibly, these interactions emanated from the old colonial discourses, and have been invariably shifted by the introduction of new digital technologies systematically organized for virtualizing the tourist experience.

Last but not least, the tourism industry has been carrier and victim of COVID-19 pandemic. The application of restrictive measures which includes the closure of borders and airports, as well as the strict lockdowns has curtailed several rights, such as the right to travel. This reminds that nation-state paves the ideological-legal framework for

tourism successfully operates (Baum & Hai 2020). Although the right to travel can be esteemed as universal, it can be very well cancelled with the individual safety is placed on danger. This is particularly true not only for COVID-19 but for the days after the World Trade center attack.

Last but not least, Korstanje & George (2021) have recently published a critical book – titled as *Mobility and globalization in the aftermath of COVID-19: Emerging new geographies in a locked world* - exploring the long-lasting effects of COVID-19 in the global world. In this text, they hold the thesis that the global world, as well as the western hospitality –at least as we imagined them- has been effaced by a new re-feudalization process where the "Other", the stranger or the tourists are persecuted. In this new world, the "Other" is an undesired agent that harms the social order. This world is marked by a constant climate of hostility, fear and paranoia that sooner than later affects hospitality. Neighboring nations have entered in an escalation of violence as well as the same technology applied to detect infected passengers has been redirected against exiles and illegal migrants. Secondly, the world has been divided in two opposed class: those who are legally encouraged for traveling and those who are circumscribed in a state of immobility. Hence the crisis of the industry has accelerated the creation and proliferation of new morbid forms of tourism oriented to commoditize the "Other´s pain". These new forms include dark or Thana-tourism, and slum or homeless tourism without mentioning virtual tourism. The physical displacement which was a classic element to define tourism is no longer valid in this new stage. Whatever the case may be, as discussed in the introduction, there are some commonalities and differences between the War on Terror and the New Normal that needs to be debated.

Commonalities between 9/11 and COVID-19 pandemic

Although there are substantial differences, COVID-19 and terrorism share some commonalities. Echoing this, Boaz Ganor (2023) noted that COVID-19 and the pandemic caused severe negative economic downturns in developed and developing nations. In fact, both exhibit a random challenge that needs urgent measures while triplicating media coverage. Beyond the medical paradigm, official authorities are torn into the same philosophical dilemma, how to protect citizens ensuring all constitutional

rights. Of course, an effective course of action requests international cooperation in a complex and ever-changing world that ultimately lacks international legislation. Countries often deal with terrorism or COVID-19 adopting different strategies. Kruglanski et al. (2020) lament that both are global threats that exploit social angst and fear. Terrorism and cOVID-19 affected liberal democracy through the incapacitation of major functions and institutions in a state of emergency. In addition, Francesco Marone (2022) argues convincingly that COVID-19 has been established as a phenomenon that transcended the control of nation-states (like terrorism) affecting homeland security. COVID-19, like 9/11, began with a social experiment that operated at different levels. What is more important, the virus radicalized some dormant narratives that potentially may very well derive in new radicalized cells or extremist organizations. Per his viewpoint, the virus has a direct impact on the characteristics of violence in Western democracies.

As the previous argument is given, the COVID-19 pandemic –known as well as the coronavirus pandemic- caused severe respiratory syndrome. The disease was originally reported in Wuhan, China by the end of 2019. In question of weeks, the virus expanded to the five continents generating a serious collapse of the air traffic as well as the halt of global trade. The pandemic not only generated devastating consequences for economies but also changed travel behavior as never before. COVID-19 symptoms included fever, sore throat, cough, and fatigue. The symptoms oscillated from asymptomatic (in which case the infected person lacks of specific symptoms while infecting the virus) to dead. This point was particularly very hard to monitor for health authorities leading to the imposition of strictest protocols and lockdowns. Civil rights and freedom were temporarily suspended by the authorities. Misinformation circulated by the media led to public political tensions. At the same time, some countries faced racial tensions and riots. Not only countries but also counties or provinces introduced different health protocols which intensified geopolitical tensions, mass deportations, or even violent manifestations against foreign (Asian tourists). Long dormant ethnic conflict or separatist discourses revived. Similar surveillance techniques and technologies, which have been deployed in the US to report potential terrorist activity in the days after 9/11, have been utilized in the COVID-19 pandemic (Mostafanezhad, Cheer & Sin, 2020; Korstanje 2023; 2014). In a few words, the "Other" became to be an undesired "Other"; the strange has been demonized as an undesired guest. Although the attacks perpetrated

in New York City have been planned by humans, and COVID-19 was a natural virus outbreak, there are some commonalities in how bio-power and the medical discipline are applied in both contexts.

At a closer look, it is important to discuss the role played by the *invisible enemy* in the social imaginary. In the War on Terror, any citizen, a friend, a neighbor, or a partner can be cataloged as a potential terrorist. This sentiment of the pandemic has been reaffirmed in what scholars dubbed as the precautionary doctrine. The precautionary doctrine, a conceptual theory that innovated in political reasoning during the Cold War, said that American democracy is being stalked by an invisible enemy that operates in the domestic domain. Most particularly, this doctrine occupied a central position in political sagas, conspiracy theories or plots, and even in Police novels. This invisible foe can be an important police officer, a vice-president, a senator, or an intelligence agent. The precautionary doctrine operates in two main domains. On one hand, it alludes to the importance of using the rational technique (even torture) to detect and isolate the danger earlier the imminent attack. On the other, the doctrine toyed with the belief that liberal democracy paved the way for a condition where free citizens live with the enemy within. As Luc Bolstanski (2014) puts it, the power of secrecy rests on the fact that it speaks in the name of nothing, from an emptied space where everything can happen. Given this, secrecy allows conspiracy plots that are never tested in the empirical ground. Hence, it endorses political authorities to start a simulacrum where their policies should be at best accepted by the citizens. In a type of radical state of exception, the terrorist looks like us, he behaves like us, but he has a different plan, he looks to exterminate all of us. Like the days after 9/11, when all citizens were suspected to be potential terrorists, in the pandemic, all persons can be a potential (terrorist) source of infection or a spreader of a lethal virus. This invariably ushered society into an emotional collapse where some individual rights have been canceled (Korstanje 2024). In addition, not only terrorism but also the COVID-19 changed forever our established travel behavior. Terrorism and the COVID-19 harmed globally the existent tourism industry as well as the spirit of hospitality in the West (Tzanelli 2023).

Another common aspect of the lockdown and the post-9/11 context has been the closure of borders and airspace to keep the homeland secure. To wit, airplanes, and commercial routes are temporarily canceled as well as the right to travel. Both, the closure of borders and the right to travel are seriously harmed during a state of emergency. This

happens because the "Other" becomes to be perceived as a danger that should be detected and eradicated. Since the nation-state has been symbolically constructed through the imposition of free transit, it is noteworthy that the right to move or travel is an essential part of liberal democracy. However, as discussed, this is a social construction warranted by the state. Over the decades, tourists have been esteemed as ambassadors of peace, democracy, and the economic prosperity of global capitalism. 9/11 was the first time when passengers (foreign tourists) directed four commercial airplanes against the WTC and the Pentagon. Tourists left to be victims of terrorism to become an active part of the terrorist plans. Having said this, during the pandemic, foreign (Asian) tourists have been demonized to be potential carriers (terrorists) of a lethal virus –that originated in China-. As Korstanje & George (2021) eloquently adhered, tourists become *undesired guests*. It was the first time that tourists have been treated as potential dangers to the public (health) order. Ultimately, COVID-19 and 9/11 accelerated a set of radical transformations in airplane security as well as in travel behavior. These changes ranged from the application of digital technologies to detect abnormalities at airports or potential terrorist activity to the imposition of the strictest travel bans. The invention of health passports or documents has been a derived consequence of the pandemic. All these described points behoove us to think about the limitations of the precautionary logic imposed by terrorism and the War on terror. These contradictions have been brilliantly debated by Cass Sunstein in his book *The Laws of Fear*. Even if, he never refers to the biomedical discipline, his development bodes well with our current understanding of the phenomenon.

The impossibility of the precautionary doctrine

September 11 represents for the United States, as well as the world, the start of a new era. Even though many countries cope with terrorists on their soil (such as Spain, the United Kingdom even part of Latin America), the World Trade Center attacks signified a large psychological impact on security for citizens of the United States. With the passing of years, Americans saw how their day-to-day style of life substantially changed. Under such a context, Sunstein presents a striking but polemic work entitled *Laws of Fear*.

Sunstein´s preliminary remarks deal with the question of why people are frightened, or, as an alternative, why people feel safe when they should feel fear. Sunstein first examines the role played by rationality in the process of dread and its consequent relationship with democracy. From his point of view, in a democracy, or at least in a deliberative democracy, the debate predominates over other forms of deliberation to decrease somewhat involuntary errors. This is the point that distinguishes a deliberative democracy from a demagogic populism. In other words, the state of a disaster that involves a community might be prevented or partly mitigated whenever the issues that impinge on public life are previously discussed, debated, and forecasted. This belief would explain the reasons why democratic societies have more instruments to face disasters than totalitarian or authoritarian ones. Whereas the latter does not provide their citizens with the necessary steps to evaluate the pre-existing risks, the former invests a considerable amount of capital in the process of mitigation and preparedness for natural catastrophes.

The problem of public fear is inextricably interrelated to the extent potential hazards are censored by the state. Sunstein goes on to acknowledge that "democracies do best if they abstract from the largest questions and try to obtain a consensus from people who disagree on or are unsure about, how to resolve those questions. In the context of fear, I suggest, it is possible to obtain just such a consensus… I understand fear to depend on some kind of judgment that we are in danger (Sunstein 2005:3)."

Starting from the premise that fears are pre-determined by previous beliefs rooted in the ways of perceiving disrupting events, people seem to be prone to experience serious risks in matters that are relatively safe whereas in some circumstances avoid real threats because of ignorance or even imprudence. His main thesis is that the precautionary principle stems from a focal belief about health, safety, and environment born in the core of European enlightenment during the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries. Nonetheless, fear like other underlying emotions works as a cascade or better a virus that contaminates others' hosts. In perspective, the social day-to-day interaction determines what can be considered a frightful event.

Sunstein criticizes the thesis that points out that Europe accepts the precautionary principle while the United States refuses it. Since Europeans overtly admit that the world should be contemplated within a margin of risk, there will be some gaps at times

when capitalist states take the necessary steps to secure the lives of their citizens. Conversely, American society seems to be unconcerned regarding the risks of global warming or genetic food modification policies. This suggests an erroneous idea that the United States requests proof (evidence) of potential dangers to take action. A false opposition between the United States and Europe leads scholars to a misleading direction in their reflection on the impacts of fear.

Sunstein emphasizes that the precautionary principle should be reconsidered taking into account the following relevant points.

- The principle of precaution very well gives origin to the risks it tries to prevent.
- Over-exposure to the precautionary doctrine predisposes public opinion to panic and inaction.
- This precautionary principle is self-blinding and hides other dangers that should be faced. Societies are more interested in creating their fears to ignore the importance of the real hazards.
- The principle of precaution often initializes a set of different set of criminal justice proceedings, subverting the normal processes.

With this background in mind, the author addresses an objective definition of risk linked to the potential danger a person can suffer or even certain probabilities a subject physically or psychologically can be injured by a third party. In other words, the risk should be adequately verified and tested by scientific-based research. Risks are often linked to empirical social practices of lay people and may very well affect the lives of others. Practical policies or strategies can be discouraged or encouraged depending on the degree of risk they represent for US soil.

A problem in this book is that Sunstein is unable to resolve the problem of what contingent means. Also, the question immediately presents itself is how law can calculate sentences based just on speculation which is also based on the somewhat fuzzy principle of precaution. After all, judgments should be sustained by events that have already taken place. Even though the probabilities of harm are serious, how does one determine action about an offense that has never taken place? These two slippery questions reveal certain theoretical limitations around the concept of the precautionary principle. Lastly, the precautionary principle re-creates the condition for a pre-crime

before it takes place in reality. The legal (Roman) jurisprudence punctuates that any crime or intention of crime can be penalized or punished if this is not committed. To put a clear example, if a person plans an assassination but this act is never committed, he should not be judged by his intentions, only by his acts. The precautionary principle blurs the borders between the intention and the act. This has been treated by Jean Baudrillard who holds that terrorism creates pseudo-events that never take place in reality. These pseudo-events are like risks that are imagined shortly and never concretize. He offers a lucid diagnosis sharing the plots of Minority Report. In a dystopian world, precogs, a prototype of clairvoyant mutants, receive psychic impressions of future crimes. The police analyze this information incurring in detentions of citizens who will be future murderers. This initiative takes part in the Precrime Police program headed by Agent Anderton (Baudrillard 2006). In consequence, the bio-power as well as the discipline of medical reasoning relies on the precautionary doctrine which is legitimated by its capacity to create future risks that never take room as it was planned.

Conclusion

The "Other", the stranger no matter than he is a tourist or a migrant has been demonized as an undesired guest. The present book chapter has critically interrogated further the changes, differences, and commonalities between 9/11 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Although extensive literature has been populated over the recent decades, little attention has been given to the interplay between the bio-power and the disciplinary mechanism of control exerted by states during the War on Terror and the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter explores not only the impacts of COVID-19 on travel behavior but also how the precautionary doctrine constructed the theory of living with the enemy within. Far from being antithetical events, the COVID-19 pandemic –as a simulacrum- reaffirms a logic installed by the War on Terror. The war on terror was fundamentally replaced by a war against a virus. In this process, the stranger (tourist) became an undesired guest. This assumption means that Western hospitality is facing a serious (if not unparalleled) crisis that needs to be investigated in the next research.

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