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CHALLENGES OF IDENTITIES, CULTURAL HERITAGE, THE ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OR TOURISM RELATED TO THE NEW CRISES

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-Conference Proceedings-

Editor

Rubin Zemon

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THREATENED IDENTITY UNDER THE ONSLAUGHT OF GLOBAL CRISES

Abstract: The paper analyzes the causes, reasons and consequences of global crises in relation to identities. Globalization as a phenomenon has a twofold impact on identities: it brings them closer together and affirms them, but at the same time, it threatens identity differences through the processes of assimilation and identity uniformity. The aim of the work is to see how global crises, primarily political and economic ones, disintegrate identities. Such identity disintegration under the influence of global, political and economic crises has been manifested in migrations during the two decades of the 21st century. The paper also analyzes two migrant waves: the first, from 2015 to 2019, and the second, from 2022 to date. The first is a consequence of the political crisis caused by the wars in Syria, Afghanistan, Libya, Nigeria and Eritrea, and the second is a consequence of the war conflict in Ukraine. The migrations that are a consequence of those wars have moved millions of people. especially towards the countries of the European Union. This also includes economic migrations as a consequence of poverty and misery in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and the countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. These migrations open up and fuel major identity problems, both now and in the future.

Key words: identity, globalization, crisis, migration.

IDENTITY PARADOXES AND GLOBALIZATION PARADOXES

Globalization is a paradox as a phenomenon and process. On the one hand, it enables the spread and availability of everything taking place in the world by upgrading the lives of individuals, social groups and societies. In this meaning, globalization connects people, opens them, especially to novelties, and modernizes their traditional lives that are deeply under the layers of past conditions burdening their present. On the other hand, globalization has bad consequences as well, not only on personal identities, but also on those of groups and societies. In other words, globalization threatens identities, not in terms of their internal change, but in complete transformation, which can even end up with their disappearance.

Powerful world empires, including technologically superior societies, may be tragic for the identity diversity because, due to their advantages, they do not only prevent the adaptation processes, but, even more dangerously, complete assimilation, i.e., blending into the identity of the powerful and the

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developed. Identities pressurized by crises, particularly economic and political ones, become threatened, i.e., they feel uncertain, unstable and on the verge of survival. Political and economic crises encourage the movement of people, or migration processes from the underdeveloped societies and states to the developed ones. Escaping from conflicts, in particular wars, as well as from absolute poverty, millions of people in columns leave their native, centuries-old habitats and go to the developed world, hoping to secure existential survival.

Globalization of economy, just as globalization of communications and transport and the global spread of democracy, have encouraged yet another identity crisis. It is manifested, *inter alia*, in the question of belonging. Some Asian countries that have become modernized and fitted into globalization processes wonder whether they belong to Asia or the Western world. Those are, for example, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan and, to a lesser extent, some other countries. There are examples of this worldwide. Traditional identities are disintegrating while new and modernized ones are being formed.

With the emergence of globalization, another problem has arisen – some group identities are losing their importance and others are assuming weight, particularly the subnational as well as regional ones. In such conditions, people tend to identify more with regional problems and connections and supranational identity affiliations because it connects them more firmly, ensures more successful business operations and fulfils their wish for a better and quality life. That is at the same time the basis on which multiculturalism and identity tolerance are gaining priority.

What has been significantly affected by globalization is the spread and strengthening of human rights, women's rights, as well as the right to healthy environment, or the resolution of environmental problems encountered by today's world. Developed industries and the demographic boom in certain parts of the plant are exactly the consequence of global processes. Human rights and women's rights are assuming a global scale, which leads to a different treatment of identity issues. Therefore, globalist elites force supranational identities and suppress national ones. One of the consequences of globalization is also huge migration all over the world. Such migration substantially affects the view and experience of identities. Through it, bi-nationalism, multinationalism and/or cosmopolitism are encouraged (Huntington, 2008, p. 22).

Globalization and the globalization process indisputably make individuals go beyond the frameworks of traditional identity landmarks and, within their own identity, they network a large number of different identities. Namely, the personal identity is also surrounded by and networked with a multitude of group identities. Every individual chooses those group identities that suit him or her most, i.e., networks part of for example those group identities enabling him or her to feel more secure and stable. In spatial changes, the process of twofold identity adaptation is created – of the newcomer ones, as well as of the natives. New contacts substantially and significantly affect these identities as well.

Great political and economic crises that have opened so far unprecedented migration movements in the world characterize the 21st century. Nowadays, humanity is exposed to a two-fold threat: small and poor states are under threat, but politically powerful states, and economically and technologically superior countries are also becoming threatened. The poor countries are threatened by emigration, while the developed ones are exposed to excessive immigration, which creates the feeling of endangerment among local population because of the arrival of undesired aliens. That is why these types of crises create huge identity disturbances.

As for the wealth of human content, it is neither good when different identities disappear nor for humanity to turn into a single identity, even if it is reduced only to the personal one, which may become impersonal due to uniformity. The threat to group and social identities also affects individual identities. Humanity is in a paradox caused by the struggle between identity uniformity and identity diversity. It is indisputable that the wealth of humanity is sustained by the wealth of various contents. Diversity is a value, but in modern societies, it is also a "fact of life".

It transpires that "exposure to different ways of thinking and acting may often stimulate innovativeness, creativity and entrepreneurship. Diversity increases interest and excitement" (Fukuyama, 2022, p. 143). The arrival of the different to cities increases not only the population numbers, but also brings numerous different contents, particularly traditional and cultural ones. With the internationalization of cities, other forms of interest are encouraged, which "bring new music, art and technologies, and form whole neighbourhoods that did not exist before" (Fukuyama, 2022, p. 143).

Diversity is also relevant for biological survival. The consequence of not mixing with others is the emergence of illnesses, particularly mental ones. Populations deprived of genetic diversity have no future. Within the monocultural framework, they become older and degenerate and, with the passage of time, they disappear biologically. Life evolution is based on the mixtures of diversities, particularly genetic ones. Genetic diversities initiate evolution "which is based on genetic variations and adaptation. General concern due to the reduced biodiversity worldwide is based on the fact that it constitutes a threat to long-term biological sustainability" (Fukuyama, 2022, p. 144).

Globalization that homogenizes cultures often causes resistance among those who were not born in the country they came to. The aspirations of the people coming to new environments, regardless of the reasons, are to maintain their own characteristics, to call for their recognition and respect, and not to accept their being suppressed in the new cultural environment. The wish and need "to feel connection with their ancestors and to know where they come from" do not end among them, and although they are not encumbered by the culture they originate from, they "want to maintain rapidly disappearing small autochthonous languages as well as traditional customs that bear witness to their earlier way of life" (Fukuyama, 2022, p. 144). Francis Fukuyama points out that diversities do not always bring what belongs to general good. This is illustrated by Syria and Afghanistan, where diversities cause large conflicts and violence, and in which tolerance and

creativity are suppressed. An example of the failure of diversities to be kept is Austria-Hungary, which was liberal and enabled different nations to have everything that did not question their differences. However, those different nations did not accept the unique political structure of Austria-Hungary. At the beginning of the 20th century, "Vienna was the melting pot that gave rise to Gustav Mahler, Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Sigmund Freud. But, when smaller national identities in the Empire – Serbs, Czechs and Austrian Germans – proved themselves, the region fell into paroxysm and intolerances" (Fukuyama, 2022, p. 144).

When various contents are destroyed, the diversity of human opportunities and the search for different crisis exits are also destroyed. This threatens not only the immediate future, but also the content-based development of humanity. Despite the importance of the essence arising on the basis of connecting similarities, there is an equally important diversity giving a meaning and vitality to such essence so as to prevent life from becoming monotonous and withered. Similarities and differences make man's life more complete both content-wise and essentially. That is how the completeness of life is maintained, i.e., life tends to rely on truth as the first among equal universal values. Only life on the whole is worthwhile, or meaningful, because it connects both similarities and differences.

MIGRANTS AND THE PROCESS OF ACCULTURATION

Migrants of different identities may be seen in different ways, most frequently as foreigners. Experiences show that the arrival of foreigners affects the homogenization of the majority of native identity, which has the attitude of non-acceptance and rejection towards them. Those strangers in identity terms are seen as pariahs by the majority identity. There is an emotional and spiritual wall raised against them, which physically and territorially places them into ghettos. With right-wing ideologies of the majority population, violence against foreigners is encouraged that is tacitly accepted in institutional terms and, even worse, it is supported and allowed. Undesired identities in such circumstances are marked as hostile (Bielefeld, 1998, pp. 125–145). The rejection of foreigners and/or foreign identities is accompanied by their feeling of anxiety that they will lose identity in the new environment. Among local population, a foreigner is "seen as a threat, an 'internal enemy', a carrier of all evils, all social defects, and even of the most dangerous, most infectious and symbolically 'most shameful' diseases: syphilis yesterday, and AIDS today" (Milza, 2009, p. 316). What is even more characteristic and seen as a threat by natives is that the members of young nations come by the migrant road, who are additionally "endowed with strong demographic vitality, with all sexual connotations that are implies. From 'common' xenophobia, which is most often manifested in derogatory expressions, political or journalist speech that exposes 'tramps', it can sometimes turn into collective violence as well" (Milza, 2009, p. 316). Such intolerance towards foreigners ends in a type of racist behaviour that is used for political purposes by the extremely right wing.

Increasing migration under the influence of political and economic crises that cause both social and value crises was particularly intense at the beginning of the 21st century. That migration wave is particularly directed towards wealthy European countries. According to OECD data, in 2003 approximately 1.3 million migrants arrived in the European Union, which is an extremely large number in comparison to the developed countries on other continents. Although local population in wealthy countries of the European Union has a negative attitude towards migrants due to their group identity, they tend, because of their personal comfort, they tend to accept them as a necessary evil because they are a source of cheap labour for them, as well as the owners of deficit qualifications in those countries.

According to the Eurostat data, 47.3 million people living in the European Union in 2010 were not born in the European countries, which accounted for about 9.4 percent of the population. The country with the greatest inflow of migrants is Germany, with 4.6 million, or 7.8 percent of the population. It is followed by France, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy and the Netherlands. What characterizes these countries is that the majority population is closed towards migrants, not only in terms of seeing them as aliens, but also in the political and legislative frameworks. The indicator is that, regardless of the length of their stay, most often as economic migration, migrants rarely get the citizenship of those countries. Citizenship is difficult to get even for the children born in migrant families, particularly in Germany. As for granting citizenship, France and the United Kingdom are somewhat more open (Baronian, 2017, pp. 160–161).

In the countries where migrants arrive, there is the process of acculturation taking place at cultural and psychological levels. In other words, it is the encounter of different cultural groups that begin living with the adaptation process. Two acculturation processes are distinguished: assimilation and cultural pluralism (Baronian, 2017, p. 163). In the assimilation process, the dominant culture of the host country is fully accepted, and migrants are completely merged first at the cultural, and then at the identity level. The second process is the non-acceptance by the dominant majority culture, the consequence of which is closing migrants into ghettos. Life in a ghetto may create a hostile attitude towards the majority population in a country and, in specific crisis situations, even violent conflicts.

The cultural pluralism process implies the possibility of two attitudes occurring in the encounter of different cultural identities: according to the first attitude, migrants keep their dominant cultural identity, but also accept the identity of the population of the host country; the second process ensures equal relations of cultural identities, and in some of the developed countries they are legislatively and institutionally regulated and guaranteed (Baronian, 2017, p. 164). When migrants integrate successfully, particularly in economic, social and political life, they "change their relationship towards the country of origin and it becomes much more complex in comparison to earlier periods. They want to maintain the ethno-cultural identity of their ancestors and to maintain certain relations with the home country, but at the same time they want to create themselves the space for such type of affiliation at the

level of their personal identity, in the way and to the extent to which it suits them" (Vuković-Ćalasan, 2021, p. 163).

Numerous studies show that the majority population has a large resistance towards cultural patterns of migrants. On that basis, there is prejudice, discrimination, but also verbal and physical violence spreading against them. That kind of intolerance entices fear among migrants and hatred among the majority population. Therefore, both migrants and the majority population live in the circumstances of increased, often unforeseeable tensions that may also turn into violent conflicts (Baronian, 2017, p. 168).

Violence most often derives from political reasons, i.e., political actors on the scene of the EU countries. Behind political actors there are hidden ultraright ideologies and parties, as well as racist ideologies and parties. Concessions regarding political freedoms under the onslaught of ultranationalist ideologies and parties derive from the wrong understanding of the freedoms of thought, speech and association. The freedoms of thought and speech imply that they are not used in spreading hatred and fears in relation to anyone. The freedom of association should be more precisely regulated in legal terms, i.e., every form of free association and action should not be permitted, especially the form that may bring freedom into question. Freedom has a restriction – in the name of freedom, it is forbidden to deprive anyone of freedom, in this case the freedom of expressing the identity of migrants (Čupić, 2021, p. 217).

THE EUROPEAN UNION AND MIGRATION – DOUBLE IDENTITY STANDARDS

Modern Europe, in the period from Renaissance to date, has attracted and been magical to all others surrounding it. Inside it has identity differences, but they assume a great scale when the "others", first from the closest environment, and then from two large continents, come and slowly enter the European social tissue. Iver Neumann is right to point out that different *others* were "and still are actively involved in the process of creating the European identity" (Neumann, 2011, p. 61). In the past few centuries, Europe has been attractive not only to those who lost hope and faith in life in their homeland, but also to those with conquering intentions, i.e., who tried to conquer and enslave Europe. With the formation of the European Union in the second half of the 20th century, an attempt was made to network different European identities in the states that accepted the formation of the EU, and to add another identity – the European one. Such identity networking did not mean that the European identity was a supra-identity, but that it was one in the series of identities accepted by people who become substantive and richer with it. In other words, the European identity is a meta-identity.

A number of the member-states of the EU, formerly the European Economic Community (EEC), needed new labour, and that need enabled economic migration that was originally related to the poorer European countries, and then expanded to the countries outside the European continent, primarily Turkey. Such migrations and the "others" were in the function of economic

growth and development that recovered Europe devastated during the Second World War, i.e., participated in its recovery and development. The conflicts taking place in the form of wars on the continents with which Europe is connected, i.e., Asia and Africa, initiated new migration waves.

Two large migrations towards the European Union countries took place in 2015 and 2022 respectively and were both the consequence of the political crises or wars waged primarily in Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria and Ukraine. In 2015, about 6.7 million people emigrated from Syria, out of whom 1.3 million arrived as refugees in the EU. In the same year, the number of migrants from Afghanistan and Pakistan also increased. However, the number of migrants from Iraq increased due to internal religious conflicts between the Sunni and the Shia. Moreover, in 2015 a large number of migrants moved from Nigeria, Eritrea and Sub-Saharan Africa towards neighbouring African countries, but also toward Europe – from Nigeria and Eritrea due to wars, and from Sub-Saharan Africa due to poverty. Sub-Saharan migrants used to go to prosperous Libya as temporary economic migration until the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 and the beginning of the civil war.

The war conflict in the territory of Ukraine, which began in February 2022, initiated mass migration and, according to the Statista data², a total of 8.2 million people left Ukraine by May 2023 and they mainly went to the EU member-states. Most Ukrainians were received by Poland (1,593,860) and Germany (1,061,623). Then by the Czech Republic (516,100), followed by other EU member-states: Spain (175,962), Italy (175,107), the Netherlands (89,730) and Portugal (58,247). Outside the EU, about 203,700 people went to the UK, while the largest number went to Russia (2,852,395).

These two huge columns of migrants, one in 2015 and the other in 2022, were differently received in the host countries. There is a great difference in the way Ukrainians were received as culturally and also territorially close to Europe, and the way the migrants from the Middle East, Asia and Africa were received. Regarding the identity, double standards are manifested; migrants coming from other cultures and religions are in much more unfavourable position as compared to those from Ukraine. One of the indicators is that Ukrainians are allowed to use various kinds of benefits, particularly those in relation to getting work permits and quicker employment. These examples show the extent to distress occurring worldwide aggravate and destroy human integrities, both the personal (individual) and group ones, especially on ethnic and religious bases.

It was assumed that the processes would take place in the European Union leading towards the creation of large segments, i.e., that these processes will integrate different identities more strongly. However, it transpired even before the arrival of migrants, and then more intensely, that the processes of fragmentation took place, which were often the consequence of a type of resentment, as well as conflicts ending in violence, particularly towards migrants. At the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries, in many

² https://www.statista.com/statistics/1312584/ukrainian-refugees -by-country / #s tatisticContainer

EU member-states, strong separatist movements appeared, e.g., in Catalonia in Spain, and in Scotland in the UK. Amin Maalouf is right to emphasize that "there is an increasing number of fragmenting factors, and a decreasing number of cementing factors. What further worsens this trend is the fact that today's world is filled with 'false cements' which, just as in the case of religious affiliation, are claimed to unite people, while in reality they play a reverse role" (Maalouf, 2020, p. 202). What is happening in the European Union, partly caused by the strong external migration pressure, shows that identity differences are being increasingly homogenized, while they can be found on a smaller scale in the situation of pluralism of differences that is guaranteed and that does not question people's equality. Such situation in the European Union is particularly encouraged by conservative and ultranationalist ideologies that are becoming more and more important among the inhabitants of the European states under the pressure of the migrant process, or the arrival of people who, due to various circumstances, from poverty and destitution to war conflicts, set out to be rescued, hoping that they will find peace in the well-organized European countries, but also avoid injustices and humiliations at the same time. Time will tell how capable the European Union is of resolving double distresses without initiating new conflicts encouraged by identity matters and issues.

CRISES AND IDENTITIES

The shaping of an identity, either personal or collective, requires the existence of certain conditions. The first condition is elementary social security guaranteeing normality, survival and development. The second condition refers to the stability of the social, economic and cultural system guaranteeing individuals and groups the reduction of both contradictions and conflicts potentially arising for various reasons within social life. The third condition is that the processes in society proceed through peaceful and gradual changes, i.e., that there is an evolutive development that will harmonize growing needs and the circumstances imposed by changes in the best possible manner. In that way, it is possible to avoid destabilization that may arise based on such change. In the process of changes, people become insecure. For that reason, people tend to show huge resistance to changes (Golubović, 2007, p. 547). Historical experience shows that when people live by established patterns of habits, they have difficulty accepting any change, even though such changes bring a better and quality life. Blaise Pascal emphasized that "habits are our nature", while "our natural principles" are nothing but "the principles of our habits" (Pascal, 1965, p. 50). Identities, both individual and collective, are proved to be quite sensitive to changes. For the above-listed reasons, changes should be gradual, slow and not causing any abrupt processes. In other words, when an identity crisis begins, it derives from the feeling of insecurity, and it is also accompanied by a type of confusion and concert as to how to deal with it when there is insecurity in social relationships.

On the surface, the identity crisis is manifested as a reaction to the non-functioning of institutions in society, but its deeper roots are related to the events in culture, mostly related to the changes in the patterns of behaviour and communication in social life. These deeper turbulences taking place in culture as the man's other nature, are exactly manifested through the destruction of values and the value system, which is especially expressed at the time of the value crisis in the form of social anomy causing huge disturbances in social life. We can distinguish two "main sources of identity crisis: one is civilizational and socio-cultural, and the other is a crisis as ontological insecurity. In the former case, the crisis emerges as a result of changes and disturbances in broader frameworks of a certain civilization and culture, while in the latter it derives from existential contradictions as an integral part of 'human nature' of each individual, but also as a result of the reflection of civilizational/cultural changes in the personal situation" (Golubović, 2007, p. 548).

Crises often unbutton various suppressed conditions in individuals and groups, which are most frequently accumulat4ed by injustice and humiliations in social life (Joković Pantelić, 2023, pp. 22–23). As far as group identities are concerned, particularly national, religious and social ones, a great role in their threatening is played by prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination which are also the consequence of group relationships. Underestimation and humiliation of certain groups leaves serious mental scars on the underestimated and the humiliated. Neither individuals nor groups can accept humiliation and injustice. Such non-acceptance is manifested either as resistance or helplessness. Speaking of resistance, the conditions of radicalism, extremism, fanaticism and fatalism emerge both among individuals and the threatened groups. All this may lead to conflicts that end in dangerous violent forms, from terrorist activities to war conflicts. Individuals and groups that cannot put up resistance are in the state of helplessness that takes them out from normal social life and makes them into the facts of biological vegetation. In other words, they withdraw from social life to solitude and, even worse, in some cases to loneliness.

Through prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination of group identities, personal identity is also brought into question. It is a two-fold strike against identity: individuals are underestimated and humiliated as members of a group and, at the same time, their personal identity is brought into question. Bringing personal identity into question is painful and unjust. Among persons, their consistence, predictability and physical peculiarity are brought into question (Čupić, Joković, 2015, p. 12). Prejudice towards others "makes us forget that there is sense in all regions and that there are thoughts wherever people live: we would definitely not like being called barbarians by those we call by that name; and if there is anything barbarian in us, it is exactly the outrage by the fact that other people also think like us, as pointed out by La Brière" (Todorov, 1994, pp. 22–23). Nationalists and ultranationalists believe that individuals from certain social groups do not have a character and that they possess no consistence when it comes to important values and matters. Moreover, in their opinion, they are unpredictable and thus potentially dangerous, i.e., a great hostile threat. Their physical peculiarity is labelled and interpreted in racist terms. In this manner, they are discriminated and stereotypes are formed towards them like rigid judgments that are dogmatically transferred and accepted. What is tragic among nationalists and ultra-extremists is that they do not permit any relationship whatsoever in which the members of other identities, but also persons, could show and prove their virtues and values.

Two researchers, Thomas F. Pettigrew and Roel W. Meertens, explored prejudice in four European countries: the UK, France, Germany and the Netherlands. Based on their research, they concluded that two types of prejudice can be distinguished regarding others: obvious and subtle ones. According to them, "obvious prejudice consists of two components: the feeling of being threatened and rejected, and the factor of intimacy, while subtle prejudice consists of three components: the traditional value factor, the factor of the extreme cultural difference between 'our' and 'the other' group, and the factor of denying positive emotions (sympathy or respect) towards 'the other' group" (Baronian, 2017, p. 169).

In the same research, the authors find out that discrimination can be direct or indirect (Baronian, 2017, p. 170). Direct discrimination is manifested intentionally and shown through inequality or unequal conditions for different groups. Indirect discrimination is subtler and it is manifested through limiting the possibilities for migrants receiving the citizenship of the country they moved into and they are living in. The lack of citizenship discriminates them institutionally because they cannot fulfil their needs, which is also manifested in the inability to ensure employment, schooling, but also adequate accommodation. Migrants have the least attractive, or low-status jobs at their disposal, which is also proved by their lowered earnings. The European countries constitutionally forbid discrimination based on origin, race, language, religion, but the only thing that is not guaranteed is citizenship. It is citizenship that shows a form of subtle discrimination towards migrants and their identities.

Crises are huge challenges when it comes to identities and their differences, i.e., acceptance or rejection of identities in new environments. The identity crisis shows the lack of communication, i.e., that it is caused by the non-existence of communication between differences and the different in a community (Bauer, 2004, p. 61). In the identity crisis, people most often rely on blood, beliefs, faith and family (Huntington, 2000, p. 140). When relying on these, then various disturbances, conflicts and violence can be expected in society.

CONCLUSION – TECTONIC IDENTITY TREMORS

It may be concluded that the world is governed by tectonic identity upheavals that bring great uncertainty, often distress to those who are forced to leave their hearths and homelands and begin searching for a more secure and stable life. On that road they are awaited by often dangerous and unforeseeable challenges, sometimes with a lethal outcome. Migrations erupting in 2015 and continuing until the COVID-19 outbreak took many lives. Particularly affected were the migrants who sailed to Europe across the Mediterranean.

Identity problems will take years and decades to be regulated in the way that will not question every individual human dignity, but also the identities deriving from someone's origin, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or class. On the way towards better reality concerning identities, it will also take plenty of sacrifice to make humanity come to its senses, make balance and sensibly resolves identity issues. The one who disputes identity questions as life content produces unfair relations and destroys universal values towards which humanity should be oriented.

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