

# **MANAGEMENT AND INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE CHALLENGES AMID SECURITIZATION STEP-UP**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The article has researched the intercultural communications in the context of ongoing securitization processes which is seen as a global trend in the past decades. Using the public administration method the article has analyzed the notion of an intercultural dialogue in its correlation with cultural security and the dangers of their securitization on the example of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The analysis has been grounded on the assumptions that a true intercultural dialogue is bound to be a pre-condition for a general and global sustainable development of well-managed societies. It has been argued that the securitization of the dialogue has more negative than positive consequences for the stability and security of the actors involved. It has been proved that this thematic area should be taken to a new level in the official discourse in order to desecuritize the intercultural communication and relaunch the dialogue. The article highlights an urgent need for the both sides of the dialogue to shift the emphasis and find a new approach to otherness, focus on solving the urgent economic and social issues and engage all layers of society into the dialogue. The need for further research into the issues of security and intercultural communication in their interconnection and expeditious measures at all levels including international organizations, governments, and local communities is substantiated.

**Key words:** management, intercultural communication, culture, security, securitization, intercultural dialogue, Euro-Mediterranean partnership

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The world is faced with a crisis of humanity and democracy amid rapidly changing, at times contradicting each other tendencies of globalisation-deglobalisation, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic extraordinary emergency circumstances. The only way out of this crisis is to “acknowledge our growing interdependence as a species and to find new ways to live together in unity and cooperation, even among strangers with differing views and preferences.” [1]

Cultural diversity, migration, and the media are excessively problematized nowadays. As a result of the Brexit referendum, Donald Trump's presidency, and the so-called "European Refugee Crisis," Europe appears to be collapsing at the moment. Hoaxes and fake news posts on these topics serve as common clickbait on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, demonstrating this. As media outlets attempt to counter this "post-Truth" era, fascist, Islamophobic, racist, xenophobic, and neo-nationalist language and sentiments have become overly prevalent on social media. In the meantime, the digital data is increasingly being used for surveillance and migration control. As a result, intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and security, the humanity-securitization nexus, and the role of information flows require more academic investigation in order to advance awareness of some of our time's most pressing societal issues. The ongoing re-appropriation of Anas Modamani's selfie with German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Facebook is an excellent example. When Merkel paid a visit to the Berlin shelter where he was staying at the time, he took a selfie. Modamani is a Darayya refugee who fled Syria. He has been wrongly linked to terrorism many times since

publishing the selfie online. He was falsely accused of being involved in the Brussel bombings (March 2016) and the latest attack at a Berlin Christmas market based on physical resemblance (December 2016). While it is undeniable that right-wing nationalist rhetoric is on the rise in Europe, it is also undeniable that a true dialogue between and within cultures is the only path Europe can take in dealing with its problems – especially the threat of radical Islam.

However, governments' reservations about domestic politics stand in the way of a collective approach in foreign issues, and this has a strong negative effect on the degree of intercultural dialogue constructivism achieved in the end.

The Southern and Eastern parts of the Mediterranean are a major source of migration to Europe and the communities are an essential need of a dialogue with Europe and the West in general. However, lack of education and the majority of the population's unsophistication seem to be the real obstacles to establishing a genuine dialogic relationship between the two sides in regards to the Mediterranean partners. Images of people burning flags with haughtiness and hate reflected in their faces generally enter us through television and newspaper coverage. This shows how the easily manipulated, uneducated masses can express their anger. However on the European side we see images of people expressing their opinions with a certain level of intellectual conscience – however biased they may be.

However, we may say that establishing a meaningful dialogue is most difficult when people are in desperate need of it. When there is a sense of urgency or distress present, communication becomes more difficult.

The most important aspects of the problematics were developed by well-known theorists and practitioners, in particular B. Buzan (1998), Vorobiova Y.V. (2021), Weaver, O. (1995), Belozor A.F. (2019), Z. Gündüz (2007), H. Malmvig (2007), Z. Savci (2006) and others.

The purpose of the article is to review and generalize the evolvement of the intercultural dialogue amid the multiple aggravating crises, study the reasons for and the consequence of the securitisation process and its effect on the dialogue. Special focus is placed on the perspectives for the intercultural communication as one of the most viable ways for the existence and stability of the western democracies.

## **2. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATIONS AND CULTURAL SECURITY**

Culture can be considered both as an independent element of public life and as an interdependent structural component of security that determines the way of perception and recognition of threats. Many authors agree that one of the definitions of cultural security is that it is freedom of thought, conscience, language, lifestyle, ethnicity, religion and tradition. Cultural security is the ability of a society to maintain its identity in the face of changing conditions and real or potential threats. Thus, cultural security can be defined, on the one hand, as the absence of a threat to the culture of society in its broad sense, and on the other hand, as a series of actions aimed at creating conditions favorable for the development and evolution of culture. In this case, the culture should have a guaranteed ability to defend itself and adapt to objective changes, while maintaining its identity. [2]

For many years, people have been and are the central object of security. Social communities linked by certain social ties are another object of cultural security. With its help, the foundations of common values characteristic of a particular group are created, an awareness of one's uniqueness and difference from other groups, and it also serves as an incentive to achieve common goals and protect common interests. The members of the group are united by objective, subjective and behavioral ties. Social groups can include both representatives of the main nation and national minorities. In the context of general security and cultural security in particular, the latter are deprived of equal rights to participate not only in political and social, but also in the cultural life of society. Their cultural rights are often violated or ignored. The right to have identity is the key one, and encroachment on the independence of groups can call into question social diversity or cultural identity. The source of such negative tendencies is prejudice and hatred

stemming from national, ethnic and religious differences. All this can lead to tough confrontation both inside the country and abroad.

In these conditions, constructive intercultural dialogue seems to be an effective means of resolving conflicts. Since the middle of the twentieth century, in the context of intensive globalization and in connection with the development of communications, it has become more intense, but also contradictory. On the one hand, the culture of an individual nation is the criterion that determines its identity, the uniqueness of its spiritual forces, creative potential and values, and on the other, global transformations act as a catalyst for the formation of a single world culture, standard and universal. Consequently, the preservation of cultural diversity is of particular relevance and the dialogue of cultures should contribute both to the formation of cultural identity and national self-awareness, and be a means of spiritual mutual enrichment.

[3] It should be noted that the population is one of the integral attributes of the state and within the framework of cultural security, it is necessary to take into account the fact of the cultural diversity of the country's population. If it is monotonous, the security of the state is identical with the security of its inhabitants. The situation changes if the country is inhabited by communities that are characterized by cultural diversity as foreign cultures can be interpreted by the state as a threat to its sovereignty.

This becomes especially noticeable when cultural centers strive to spread their values or begin to change the cultural space of the country. An example of this is the 2009 referendum in Sweden to ban the further construction of minarets, the wearing of the hijab and giving state status to religious holidays. In this way, the state, using a number of its mechanisms and instruments, limited the implementation of the cultural rights of minorities, which were interpreted as a threat.

There are three categories to consider when identifying threats to cultural security: object, form and source. [3] The object criterion is traditionally considered a priority. However, the value attached to it can be relative or controversial and what is of undeniable value to some groups is of no value to others, or may even be viewed as a threat to cultural security. Form as a factor of cultural threat is associated with such factors as by whom, under what circumstances, in what way this threat is presented. This criterion can be considered on the example of the perception of immigrants as a source of threat. The form is associated with securitization, presenting the topic of immigration as a threat and causing an emotional reaction from the target audience, often using the full range of prejudices and phobias prevailing in a given society. The source as a security criterion allows us to pinpoint the deepest sources of threats which are beyond human control; these are natural factors. Possible societal reasons include the lack of emancipation, measures taken at the national and international level aimed at oppressing cultural minorities. At the national level, such measures may include: cultural identity, restriction of freedom of expression, use of the mother tongue, access to education, forced deportation, and in extreme cases, ethnic cleansing.

There is also a problem in defining a cultural minority, which, at first glance, does not seem to be a matter of extreme importance, but the difficulty in understanding what constitutes a cultural minority leads to difficulties in defining rights and freedoms, their carriers, and how they will be limited. Threats to cultural security can also be rooted at the military, political, economic and environmental levels, which attests to the complexity and versatility of the phenomenon of cultural security and its interdependence with other levels.

Security can only be guaranteed through the joint implementation of regulatory and policy frameworks. Legal methods of regulation, which originate in international law, determine rules and norms, establish methods of regulation, which in turn creates certain standards of behavior and at the same time sets the direction for the development of the legislation of an individual state. The activities of UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the European Union are fundamental in the field of cultural security. These organizations develop and adopt codes of practice, the purpose of which is to preserve the cultural and civilizational heritage of countries, maintain the diversity of intangible values and regulate the activities of risk groups. Most of the political actions of countries to ensure cultural security are taken in response to the initiatives of governmental and non-governmental international organizations, and all

kinds of strategies and programs are often the result of their joint activities. However, the actions of some individual states, pursuing exclusively their own goals and setting their own priorities, influencing the adopted course of global security policy, put measures to preserve global security and maintain the dialogue in jeopardy.

Huntington's thesis about the clash of civilizations has led to the neglect of the fact that the origins of conflict must be found primarily inside societies, rather than between them, and that expeditious, economically one-dimensional, and asymmetrically structured globalization has resulted in deep and dangerous social divisions over the last decades. Even the militant Islamism can be seen as a response to this disproportional globalization.

### **3. SECURITISATION AS A THREAT TO INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE**

Securitization means creation of a threat that requires immediate response. When the government securitizes a problem, it presents it as an "existential threat," necessitating "emergency steps" and justifying "actions beyond the usual limits of democratic procedure." Securitization thus "has tremendous power as a tool of social and political mobilization." [4] Putting an issue on the security agenda convinces us that we must provide immediate and unprecedented responses; it signals impending danger and is thus given top priority.

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is a good example of an intercultural dialogue which has undergone securitization processes according to some authors. When it was initiated in 1995 it adopted three main directions: a political and security partnership emphasising the rule-of-law, together with respect for human rights and pluralism; an economic and financial partnership attaching importance to "sustainable and balanced economic and social development with a view to achieving the objective of creating an area of shared prosperity"; and finally, a partnership in social, cultural and human affairs. The idea of this dialogue was associated with the rejection of the 'clash of civilisations' concept in favour of intercultural dialogue in Habermasian tradition. The promotion of democracy and the rule of law were at the heart of this initiative, which includes expanding conventional democratic procedures, respect for human rights, and introducing a market economy. Since the maintenance of security in the region is inextricably connected with democracy, the combination of these elements was intended to contribute to the development of an area of stability, to the benefit of both the European Union and the countries on the Mediterranean's southern shores.

However, following the terrorist attacks in London and Madrid, attitudes have changed. While official European discourse continues to emphasize the importance of multi-dimensional cooperation with the Mediterranean partners, security has gradually taken precedence over democracy and human rights promotion. This was reflected in the European Security Strategy of 2003 and, later, in the European Neighbourhood Policy, which was officially launched in 2004. The proposed security measures were addressing key threats, especially terrorism, made Arab partner-states important interlocutors on these challenges. Moreover, the EU no longer seemed to regard democratization of its periphery as a critical component of mutual security. After prioritizing the fight against terrorism in Europe, the EU now seeks to foster security community activities along its borders, independent of any concerns about democracy and the rule of law among its Mediterranean partners. For instance, the way the European Neighbourhood Policy and its Action Plans are structured to strengthen bilateral cooperation to counter terrorism is ambiguous enough to allow for various interpretations of critical issues like legitimate and effective means of fighting terrorism in particular circumstances, or how to respond to a terrorist organization's increasingly powerful political wings.

The failing democracy, the perceived ability of Islamists to fill the political space, and the involvement of some North African nationals in suspected alQa'ida-related terrorist activities (ex. the Hamburg cell and the Casablanca bombings) have all highlighted the urgent need to address security and democracy problems in the Maghreb. The challenge of striking a balance between the discourses on securitisation and democratisation has contributed to the complexity of this agenda. In reality, the conflicting list of goals makes any contact between the two discourses within the Euro-Mediterranean context especially difficult. The securitization of terrorism and counter-

terrorism policies in recent years has had a significant effect on domestic, European Union, and Euro-Mediterranean policies. [5] As a result of this fundamental divergence on security issues the current regional efforts haven't been able to stop tensions in the region, resolve its long-standing disputes and make the dialogue productive. In reality, in spite of numerous efforts to promote democracy and "de-securitise" North Africa's political situation, after more than a decade of political cooperation within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Maghribi socio-political environment has remained practically unchanged.

Although the aims were good and the "intercultural" dialogue was inspired by Habermasian dialogue principles, it was turned into a tool for preventing conflicts and war. It was securitized in the sense that it recognized a source of cultural tension between cultures and presented dialogue as an "urgent necessity," implying an ominous future in the absence of it. A Habermasian dialogue, on the other hand, will not be realized if it is organized around security and claims extraordinary authority and significance.

H. Malmvig [6] identifies several conditions that suggest the intercultural dialogue is being securitized. Firstly, a few changes that took place in the wording of the title of the Dialogue - Dialogue between Cultures and Civilisations' in Valencia and Crete; 'Dialogue between Peoples and Cultures' and finally the 'Dialogue between Cultures' - reflects the readiness of the Euro-Mediterranean partners to avoid using the Huntington's civilisational logic; however, the term "clash" is still used in the High Level Report, but instead of a clash of civilisations, a clash of ignorance is highlighted as an undesirable situation.

The second condition pinpointed by Malmvig is "the articulation of dialogue as an urgent necessity." The urgency expressed in the official rhetoric of the advisors and negotiation participants produces a situation in which it seems that unless the inhabitants of the region act, it will be too late to find a constructive solution. An immediate future with connotations of a catastrophe is strongly implied with this reference to the urgency of the matter.

Malmvig's third indicator is "the articulation of a dangerous future in the absence of dialogue," implying that if dialogue is not held, wrong perceptions and stereotypes will prevail, encouraging aggression and extremism. A closed mentality fueled by political and religious ideas, as argued in the High Level Report, may lead to frightening examples of deviance.

Malmvig also mentions that High Level Report views the dialogue as a weapon for preventing, defusing, averting, and resolving conflicts. The aims of intercultural dialogue are effectively securitized as it is expressed in terms of war and arms. Intercultural dialogue, it appears, is not to be encouraged in order to reinforce culture, but rather culture is to strengthen security, according to this logic of securitization. But, it could be argued that securitization has a positive side, in the sense that emphasizing feelings of vulnerability and insecurity can enhance social and political mobilization, highlighting the existence of a security risk with consequences of danger and priority in order to convince people to take measures they may not have endorsed under normal circumstances. However, the negative consequences of securitisation tend to outweigh the positive consequences, as it seems that securitisation is an extreme type of politicisation, and that certain problems, especially intercultural dialogue, is not to be treated as security concerns so that a true "cultural" dialogue could be established. Securitisation entails strict oversight and supervision processes in the decision-making process, as well as the marginalization of non-governmental organizations, preventing them from influencing and participating in relevant debates and discussions. These ramifications of securitization are far from the concepts of openness and equality emphasized in Habermasian type of dialogue.

Looking at the EU mobility cooperation with Morocco, it was discovered that Morocco, in particular, has taken use of the EU's significant weight in the migration debate to demand additional funding. The recent migrants' crisis in Spanish Ceuta clearly demonstrates the failed attempts to have an equal true intercultural dialogue in the region when Spain and Morocco have had political tensions and raised reciprocal claims which resulted in a massive influx of migrants into the enclave and spiraling securitization of the problem. The phenomenon of migration

securitization confirms its own hypothesis: if migration is presented as a threat, then the arrival of migrants, whether in rising numbers or not, will always be a crisis to be managed.

The developing technologies, which are supposed to manage the crises, such as drones and the specific information and surveillance technologies that come with them, change the security-migration management nexus on EU borders and intensify the securitisation logics.

Border controls have been so blatantly securitized that the EU agency, Frontex, utilized an obviously securitized terminology in its own reports, in which the language used to characterize migrants had become entirely dehumanized. Despite this, governments have not been able to diminish either migration or prejudice by making migration more difficult. Instead, it is obvious that when migrants are regarded as criminals, put in immigration detention centers, or deported, negative opinions about them grow. As intolerance grows, so does the level of securitization. This genesis explains our perception of the exponential step up of the securitising forces. The post-Brexit situation in the United Kingdom, as well as the electoral outcomes in Italy and the Czech Republic, have seen a significant surge in nationalistic, xenophobic and far-right parties, are obvious examples of these processes.

Securitization draws both financial and political resources. However, security is not a universal good, and there are certain issues that should not be securitized at all. Securitization is an aggressive form of politicization that entails intense governmental control, and surveillance, as well as the decreasing role of non-governmental groups. [7] This has also occurred in the Dialogue between Cultures, which has become politicized and tightly regulated by governments. Furthermore, rather than involving the general public, the dialogue primarily consists of intellectual exchanges and conferences among elites. In terms of actors and topics, the dialogue should become more accessible and inclusive.

Thereby, hard security issues are prevailing over promoting the development of democratic states and, as a result the region's security situation remains fragile.

#### **4. THE WAY FORWARD – SHIFTING EMPHASIS**

It's unfortunate that politicians are attempting to address multifaceted and complex foreign issues solely through the lens of "cultural politics." When issues occur between the Western value culture and other areas of the world, "cultural dialogue" – or the much more ambiguous "critical dialogue" – arises as a potential solution.

In this way, the West hopes to portray itself as proactive. However, as Z. Gündüz [8] argues, in the current political climate, this is absolutely inadequate. If international problems are to be solved, the states must concentrate on the most important issues and juxtapose a realistic picture to the disastrous propaganda of "hostile cultures" à la Huntington. As long as diverse issues such as economic growth, women's rights and authoritarianism are all discussed in terms of "culture," the root of today's problems is not to be found, as it lies in economic and social systems, rather than religious or ethical values. Human rights, democracy, and civil society, which ensure peaceful coexistence, are well established to thrive only on a sustainable economic and social foundation. Unfortunately, the West has repeatedly behaved in opposition to this by prioritizing its economic interests above the social needs of other nations. [9]

Regrettably, the EU Council's numerous Directives, reports, workshops, and roundtables on anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, and "intercultural dialogue", prohibiting discrimination in many areas have so far not worked out practicable guidelines for policies. Nonetheless, although the EU still struggles to have a unified foreign policy, these efforts build-up its "normative strength" and willingness to contribute to peace and democracy. [10]

Indeed, the EU's soft power and peaceful strategies contrast sharply with the United States' tactics, as shown by the current "War on Terror." Former EU Commission President Romano Prodi announced shortly after the September 11 attacks at a meeting: "We must avoid at all costs the association between terrorism and the Arab and Islamic world. We are engaged in a dialogue between equals and we should promote this through cultural exchanges. It is of utmost

political importance that we continue our dialogue.” And the EU has managed not to deviate from this path, even though with mixed results.

Amirah and Behr [11] argue that the European Union will have to step away from its current “donor mindset” and navigate towards real partnerships and people-to-people confidence-building initiatives holding the belief that practices focused on dialogue and mutuality could provide a promising basis for improving the European Union's ties with the South Mediterranean, and in particular, for combating radicalization processes both within and outside Europe.

In order to achieve a true progress in the relationship on both parts of the Mediterranean, a creation of space for essential self-reflection is necessary. A conversation requires an overlap of the Self and the Others to create a shift away from domineering relationships and attitudes. In this sense, in order to create a conducive atmosphere for a dialogue, Europe must address its own hegemonic behaviors, while its partners must examine their own actions and attitudes more critically. As Pace [12] puts forward, “the recognition of one’s own participation in another’s ‘language’ can create a bridge and a common horizon for dialogic interactions” in line with the requirement of a fusion of horizons expressed in Bakhtin’s thoughts.

Regardless of how good the motives are inside the Euro-Mediterranean space to achieve a meaningful dialogue that brings communities and cultures together, the recent “cartoon crisis” demonstrated that neither policymakers nor the general public have grasped the meaning of the concept of “dialogue.”

We share the view of Z. Savcı [13] who says that Europe needs to stop looking at any problem they have – particularly their relationships with others inside and outside the EU – through an egocentric lens, connecting every action and reaction to the ideas of liberty, freedom of thinking, and expression, emphasizing them as their own universal values, ignoring that above all notions of liberty lies a concept of mutual respect.

B. Khader [14] suggests that it is important to fully understand the specific national issues and challenges occupying the minds of the peoples in the Southern Mediterranean in order to enhance the scope and the vision of the proposals and activities, and achieve “an ensemble of concepts which constitutes a moral force, a Mediterranean conscience.”

It is obvious that the Europe’s attempts to promote the intercultural dialogue with its partners concerning development, human rights and democracy have met obstacles and slowed down with no evident outcomes, which means that they are in an urgent need of a sensitive, prudent strategy. The EU ought to focus on young elites and consciously address critical issues in the Mediterranean region, such as desertification, climate change, water shortage, political instability and social tensions. European governments must also encourage Muslims to integrate into all aspects of society. As for the partners, the Arab governments should prioritize maintaining control over development policy as, unfortunately, many reform projects have been postponed or even terminated prematurely. Also, Western states often prioritize the preservation of domestic stability which has harmed participants' reliability from both sides. Muslims should be integrated into society and become full citizens while avoiding the emergence of ghettos, minority status, and closed groups. Respect must be extended to all, particularly to what others consider sacred. All acts of terrorism and violence, especially those perpetrated in the name of Islam, should be strongly condemned by Islamic clerics, who should make it clear that such acts are harmful to Islam. According to H  l  ne Flautre [15], Chair of the European Parliament’s Subcommittee on Human Rights, Europeans finally “must abandon the idea that the European Union (EU) is the ‘teacher’ in matters of democracy and avoid what borders on a neo-colonialist attitude.” Z. G  nd  z suggests that the condition of numerous Muslims in Europe would vastly improve if Europeans succeed in this and see themselves equal

with Muslims. As a result, the West must stop securitizing Islam and instead strive to comprehend that there is an Islam in Europe just as there is an Islam in Europe.

To sum up the recommendations suggested in this section regarding the current and the future state of the intercultural dialogue in particular, it can be stated that to meet the challenges of the third millennium, both the North of the Mediterranean and Europe need a fresh approach to otherness, whereas the South of the Mediterranean needs a new way of handling the past, a political opening, and new governance.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The series of terrorist attacks since September 11, 2001 has exposed the weakness of a global superpower and led the European countries to realize that no single nation is capable of tackling the complex escalated issues on its own. The tragic events undoubtedly resulted in a closer relationship between the Maghrib and the European Union's security discourses, strengthening their cooperation in the areas of Justice and Home affairs. In addition, the Maghrib regimes used the September 11th attacks to condemn terrorism in general, as well as to highlight the EU's lack of awareness and recognition of their own fight against "internal terrorism" in previous years.

However, following September 11, 2001, the European Union concentrated on establishing a security regime and developing subsequent security policies, ignoring other critical aspects of the "freedom, security, and justice" agenda. In an attempt to prioritize the battle against transnational terrorism at the regional and global levels, European foreign policy has undergone a similar securitization process, both within and outside the EU. Also, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership's actual policies make the coexistence of democracy, peace, and security inextricably incompatible since the security is prioritised over any other objective.

The Union's attempts to establish strong security regimes, on the basis of international law and respect for human rights, should rebalance Justice and Home Affairs issues with other elements of its foreign policy if they are to be ultimately successful. In either case, the proliferation of agencies and alliances over time – by which European securitization has been articulated – has hampered the formation of comprehensive regional frameworks. Consequently, there is currently no coherent European agenda for the Mediterranean.

The oversecuration of counter-terrorism initiatives in the Mediterranean that resulted had an effect on the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue as a whole. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, in particular, has failed to adequately resolve a variety of contradictions and dilemmas. Surprisingly enough, this emphasis on security is impeding the Maghrib's complete political democratization and may even jeopardize achieving the actual security which is supposed to be achieved.

Europeans should look for real democratic opportunities, enhancement of multi-party political cultures in the South Mediterranean and democratic institutions in order to overcome major stumbling blocks to regional peace and stability. Besides, the Union ought to develop own projects to promote democracy in the Maghrib in order to enable substantive and qualitative reforms in the framework of true intercultural dialogue.

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