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**THE IMPACT OF TERRORISM AS A SOCIAL PHENOMENON ON THE POLITICAL  
AND RELIGIOUS SPHERES OF THE SOCIETY**

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**Abstract**

The article looks at the origins of terrorism as a social phenomenon, as well as the historical development of its impact on the political and religious spheres of the society. Additionally, the authors analyze some specific features of how terrorism emerged and developed as a social and political phenomenon over the history of different countries. The article demonstrates an approach, according to which the phenomenon of terrorism, as the majority of social phenomena, has naturally gone through a few stages of evolution, starting from its inception in the ancient era to the modern stage of development of the world civilization. At each stage of its evolution, terrorism as a socio-political phenomenon is determined by factors and conditions that emerge and take shape in the course of development of human civilization in the context of specific historical and territorial development of individual states. In the first place, modern terrorism is conditioned by the development of globalization processes.

**Key Words**

Terrorism – History of terrorism – Factors of terrorism – Evolution of terrorism

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## Introduction

There are controversial opinions about the emergence of terrorism<sup>1</sup>. It appears that it is to some extent connected with the lack of uniformity of both the doctrinal and normative approaches to understanding terrorism as a social phenomenon, including its interpretation in a historical retrospective. In its turn, it explains the existence of several approaches, including approaches to the genesis of the phenomenon under consideration and its impact on the political and religious spheres of the society.

We suppose that terrorism could emerge not simply in the context of contradictions in the society, but only in a situation when their resolution takes an extreme turn. For instance, hotbeds of terrorism more frequently emerge in the areas where there is no religious education about true religious values, the church plays an insignificant role and has no authority among the population. Terrorism could not technically emerge in a primitive society: intercommunal clashes cannot be classified as manifestations of terrorism since they represent a struggle for living space and means of subsistence, i.e. a struggle for survival.

Over the last two decades, the history of emergence and development of terrorism has been discussed by many authors since the analysis of the current condition of this phenomenon is impossible without its retrospective analysis. However, there are hardly any monographs devoted to the history of the emergence of terrorism. Among the researchers who touched upon the historical aspect of the emergence of terrorism, one can name the following Russian authors who explored the evolution of terrorism in different countries: N.N. Afanasev & V.S. Shukshin<sup>2</sup>, O.V. Budnitskii<sup>3</sup>, V.YU. Belskii and A.I. Satsuta<sup>4</sup>.

The issues connected with the ideology of terrorism, as well as cooperation between different countries in the sphere of combating international terrorism, were considered by O.V. Budnitskii<sup>5</sup>, R.V. Nigmatullin<sup>6</sup> and others.

In order to examine the impact of terrorism as a social phenomenon on the political and religious spheres of the society, we will analyze works by Russian scientists, including those published in foreign sources. We intend to identify the development patterns of terrorism and the role of religion from the perspective of its impact on different types of social relations.

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<sup>1</sup> N. N. Afanasev y V. S. Shukshin, *The historical roots of terrorism* (Moscow: Yuniti-Dana, 2002) y S. V. Reznik; S. A. Kutomanov y V. N. Mizaev, "Islamic terrorism as a transcultural project. Nauchnye vedomosti Belgorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta", *Seriya: Filosofiya. Sotsiologiya. Pravo* num 13 (2010): 299-306.

<sup>2</sup> N. N. Afanasev y V. S. Shukshin. *The historical roots of terrorism* (Moscow: Yuniti-Dana, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> O. V. Budnitskii, "Terrorism through the eyes of a historian: the ideology of terrorism", *Voprosy filosofii* num 5 (2004): 3-20.

<sup>4</sup> V. Yu. Belskii y A. I. Satsuta, *Terrorism in historical retrospective and in the modern conditions* (Moscow: Yuniti-Dana, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> O. V. Budnitskii, *Terrorism in the Russian liberation movement: ideology, ethics, psychology*, *Rossiiskaya politicheskaya entsiklopediya* (Moscow: 2000).

<sup>6</sup> R. V. Nigmatullin, "On the history of cooperation between states in the fight against international terrorism", *Vestnik Rossiiskogo universiteta druzhby narodov* num 1 (2005): 108-115.

## Methodology

the historical, logical, dialectical, comparative, structured, systems and other methods, the integrated use of which provided an opportunity to identify the determinants of the emergence of such a negative socio-political phenomenon as terrorism and analyze some evolutionary patterns governing this phenomenon.

In particular, the historical, logical and systems approaches allowed us to identify the connection and interdependence between the emergence of terrorism and the conditions of specific historical and civilizational development of individual states, as well as the impact of certain socio-political phenomena on the genesis of terrorism.

The combination of the historical and comparative methods helped to understand the specific features of the ways, in which historical environment influenced the development of terrorism at different stages of its evolution and the impact of religion on its formation.

## Results and discussion

1. It has been found that terrorism is a historical phenomenon, which has its roots deep in the past — in the ancient period when the foundations of terrorist ideology and practices started to develop and the first organized terrorist groups emerged.

2. The main methods and forms of terrorist activities, such as mass impersonalized murders of government officials, bomb explosions in public places, sending explosives by post and expropriations appeared from the second half of the 19th century to the first decade of the 20th century, in the era of so-called classic terrorism.

Totalitarian regimes of the 20th century played one of the key roles in the development of terrorism since they were the first government institutions to use terrorist methods systematically as a tool of domestic and foreign policy at the state level. These were the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century that promoted the entry of terrorism into the international arena and its frequent usage for external expansion.

4. The standard organizational structure of an international terrorist movement was also formed in the 20th century. The center of such structure is the coordinating state and the sponsor of the movement represented by an international organization, while the periphery is comprised of a wide range of local terrorist organizations in the countries that are the objects of expansionist interests.

5. The modern state-sponsored terrorism is developing in the context of worldwide globalization processes, which leads to a sharp rise in the threats it poses for national and international security; the borders between domestic and international state-sponsored terrorism tend to fade away.

6. An integral part of the modern system of counter-terrorism efforts is the participation of religious organizations in this process, in the first place Christian ones. For instance, one of the missions set by the Russian Orthodox Church at the current stage of development is combating extremism and terrorism.

## Stages of development of terrorism

In the course of the research, it has been found that having its roots deep in the past, terrorism as a socio-political phenomenon is a product of conditions and factors that arise and form in the process of development of the human civilization as a result of its permanently growing complexity and increasing inconsistency of its organization and functioning. The foundations and origins of the genesis, evolution and transformation of terrorism lie in the differences and dynamics of the economic and social living conditions, in the problems existing in the political and spiritual spheres of social life, divergence and antagonism between interests and values shared by different individuals, social groups and institutions<sup>7</sup>.

Research into the evolution of the development of terrorism allows gaining a better understanding of the reasons and conditions that encourage the formation of key elements of modern terrorism as a social phenomenon that has spread all over the world.

Some researchers tend to think that terrorism emerged together with civilization and is one of its features. In the course of contemporary history, it has turned into a tool of violence used in order to achieve certain political, economic or social goals.<sup>8</sup>

Other authors that view terrorism as a specific Islamic tradition believe that it first emerged in the 11–12th centuries<sup>9</sup>.

The third group of scientists think that terrorism originated during the era of Reformation in France (the 16th — the beginning of the 17th century).

The fourth group of researchers, who classify terrorism as political assassination, believe that the history of modern terrorism started at the beginning of the 19th century.

Research has also shown that throughout its evolution terrorism has gone through five main stages<sup>10</sup>:

The 1st stage — the epoch of early terrorism (proto-terrorism) — origination of terrorism in the Ancient Era and its development until the mid-19th century, when the foundations of the ideology and practice of terrorism were laid. The 2nd stage — the beginning of the “era of terrorism” (the era of classic terrorism) — the second half of the 19th century — the first decade of the 20th century, when the basic methods and forms of terrorist activity were developed (mass depersonalized killings of government officials, bombings in public places, sending explosive devices by mail, expropriation).

<sup>7</sup> V. Yu. Belskii y A. I. Satsuta, *Terrorism in historical retrospective and in the modern conditions* (Moscow: Yuniti-Dana, 2017) y L. L. Alekseeva; O. V. Balaban; D. A. Pashentsev; A. N. Yakushev y O. A. Pervozvanskaya, “Diversification possibilities of higher education in culture and art: the experience of longitudinal study”, *Astra Salvensis* num 6 (2018): 472-486.

<sup>8</sup> N. N. Afanasev y V. S. Shukshin, *The historical roots of terrorism* (Moscow: Yuniti-Dana, 2002).

<sup>9</sup> S. V. Reznik; S. A. Kutomanov y V. N. Mizaev, “Islamic terrorism as a transcultural project. Nauchnye vedomosti Belgorodskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta”, *Seriya: Filosofiya. Sotsiologiya. Pravo* num 13 (2010): 299-306.

<sup>10</sup> N. N. Afanasev y V. S. Shukshin, *The historical roots of terrorism* (Moscow: Yuniti-Dana, 2002) y D.A. Pashentsev. *The construction of crime during the estate-representative monarchy in Russia. Vserossiiskii kriminologicheskii zhurnal* Vol: 10 num 3 (2016): 431-437.

The 3rd stage — transitional — from the 1920s to the 1950s.

At this stage, terrorism from a local phenomenon turned into a permanent factor in the political life of many countries and peoples (France, Palestine, Poland, the western regions of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Belarus, the Middle East, South and Central America, countries of Southeast Asia), representing a serious public danger.

At this stage of the evolution of terrorism, a transition from predominantly individual to group varieties of terrorist activity occurred and new forms and methods of terrorism appeared (aviation terrorism, hostage-taking).

The 4th stage — the epoch of urban guerrilla warfare (the 1960s–1980s). It was marked by emergence of large organized terrorist groups (for instance, Rote Armee Fraktion in the Federal Republic of Germany or Brigate Rosse in Italy), an increase in sophistication of terrorist tactics and violence of the methods of influencing the society and its political institutions, cooperation and internationalization of relations between terrorists and their illegal organizations.

The characteristic feature of this stage was the convergence of interests between terrorists and governing political elites. From an anti-system activity, terrorism started to transform into an activity carried out at the request of the system to an increasing degree.

Terroristic activity transformed into a pragmatic political technology of radical resolution of sensitive issues in the sphere of governing domestic and international socio-economic and political processes used by political, financial and economic elites.

The 5th stage — the era of modern terrorism — is determined directly by socio-economic processes taking place in the international arena, where terrorism is an integral component of globalization processes embracing the global socio-economic, cultural and political space<sup>11</sup>.

### **Religious forms and varieties of terrorism**

The first historical varieties and forms of terrorism go back to the Chinese triads that existed in China starting from the 2nd century BC. Triads were a type of crime syndicates traditional for that period. Initially, triads were organized as secret guerrilla units fighting against a Manchurian emperor from the Qing dynasty.

It is generally believed that triads first originated on the island of Taiwan, where the remains of the supporters of the previous Chinese dynasty Ming fled from mainland China defeated by the Manchurians.

Triads existed in mainland China up to the 1940s, when the communist authorities of China got down to their annihilation. However, even nowadays triads still exist in Chinese diasporas in other countries as organized crime groups.

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<sup>11</sup> E. V. Bogmatsera. Activities conducted by international terrorist organizations as a factor in modernization of law. Development of legal regulation in the 20th century: trends and perspectives, Materials of the International research and practice conference devoted to the 140th jubilee of Belgorod State University (Belgorod: OOO "GiK", 2016).

In the 1st century AD in Judaea, the Sicarii set up organizations that fought with the Roman rule for the autonomy of Thessaloniki province. Members of this organization attacked representatives of the Roman authorities and Jews who cooperated with these authorities. The actions of the Sicarii represented a form of political protest and were of national-liberation nature.

The ancient Indian sect of Thugs (“swindlers”) is also considered to be a terrorist group. The sect originated in the early Middle Ages and was active until the mid-19th century. Members of this sect robbed and killed travelers without making any political demands. They conducted their religious worship by making sacrifices to the goddess Kali.

In the Middle Ages, the Assassins, members of the Muslim sect of the Ismaili, inspired terror throughout the territory of modern Iran.

The Assassins waged a secret war on the opposers of their religious and political beliefs and crusaders coming to the Middle East.

Surely, researchers of terrorism do not disregard the Medieval Inquisition and its mass repressions of renegades. Medieval acts of terrorism include the Massacre of St. Bartholomew and murders of active opposers of the Roman Catholic Church, such as William of Orange (1584), Henry III (1589) and Henry IV (1610).

The history of acts of terror committed in the modern age starts from the Gunpowder Plot organized by Guy Fawkes (1605), which became a response to Reformation processes and pursued the aim of restoration of Catholicism in England. The main target of the plot was King James I, who openly expressed his liking for Protestants and conducted a few demonstrative executions of Catholics.

The Reign of Terror during the French Revolution is a classic example of state-sponsored terrorism. Charlotte Corday, who assassinated Jean-Paul Marat in 1793 in revenge for the Jacobins’ terror, is also considered to be a terrorist.

The Sicilian mafia, the Neapolitan Camorra and the brotherhood of Carbonarism, which existed in Italy at the beginning of the 19th century, are also thought to have been terrorist organizations. They aimed to create a national Italian state and fought against the Bourbon Monarchy, the Austrian rule and corrupt domestic comprador regimes.

The 19th century was an age of class struggle, left-wing radicalism, further modification of types, forms and methods of terrorism. In this period, terror started to be used not only by national-liberation movements, but also by radical revolutionaries (anarchists, socialists, republicans), who developed first projects of terrorist ideology called “philosophy of the bomb” and “propaganda by the deed” (M. Bakunin, K. Heinzen, P. Kropotkin and others). Practical implementation of these ideologies in Europe and the USA led to a long series of high-profile political assassinations, including attempted assassinations of King of the French Louis Philippe I, German Emperor Frederick III, Franz Joseph I of Austria, Napoleon III, Queen of Spain Isabella (1856), King of Prussia William I, Chancellor of Germany Otto von Bismarck, the President of France Sadi Carnot (1894), US Presidents Abraham Lincoln (1865), William McKinley (1901) and others. Radical revolutionaries used terror not only against representatives of political elites of that time but also against high- and middle-ranking government officials, who embodied the hated governing authorities.

The emergence of terrorism in Russia is usually associated with the “liberation movement” that existed at the end of the 19th century<sup>12</sup>.

The history of terrorism in the 19th-century Russia started with the revolutionary organization “Narodnaya Volya” (“People’s Will”), which aimed for the transition of political power to the people and resorted to political assassinations in order to destabilize and weaken the Russian tsarist regime.

At the beginning of the 20th century (1902–1911) the combat organization of socialist revolutionaries followed in the footsteps of “narodnaya volya” and assassinated thousands of tsarist officials. the assassination of a great reformer, prime minister of russia p.a. stolypin by a suicide attacker in 1911 sparked a massive public outcry.

Members of the Socialist Revolutionary organization targeted “only those who were involved in repressions”. They took great care to ensure that no women or children were hurt in the course of their acts of terror, which constituted the “humanity” of this movement.

The history of Russian terrorism also includes the Red and White Terror that took place in the period of the October Socialist Revolution and the Civil War (1917–1922).

Modern manifestations of terrorism and extremism in the Russian Federation are a consequence of the collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 20th century and the emergence on its territory of 15 sovereign states with a variety of religious faiths. Moreover, since 1994, in Article 19 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation, the state guarantees the equality of rights and freedoms regardless of religion, prohibiting restrictions on the grounds of social, racial, national, linguistic, or religious affiliation. Federal Law of the Russian Federation of July 25, 2002 No. 114-FZ “On Countering Extremist Activities” by extremist activity means “forcibly changing the foundations of the constitutional system and violating the integrity of the Russian Federation; public justification of terrorism and other terrorist activities; incitement of social, racial, national, or religious hatred; propaganda of exclusivity, superiority, or inferiority of a person on the basis of their social, racial, national, religious, or linguistic affiliation or attitude to religion; violation of the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of a person and a citizen depending on their social, racial, national, religious, or linguistic affiliation or attitude to religion”.

In the post-Soviet space and in the states that have arisen there, many factors have had a decisive influence on the content and nature of the manifestations of extremism and terrorism, their forms and the dynamics of these forms, among which are the rejection of a unified ideology and the introduction of numerous principles of organization that were previously alien to public consciousness, as well as the rapid degradation of the social and cultural spheres of public life<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> O. V. Budnitskii, *Terrorism in the Russian liberation movement: ideology, ethics, psychology*, Rossiiskaya politicheskaya entsiklopediya (Moscow: 2000).

<sup>13</sup> E. V. Bogmatsera, I.E. Ilyichev. *Terrorism: origins, concept, threats*. Vestnik Belgorodskogo yuridicheskogo instituta MVD Rossii num 3 (2018): 12-29 y V. P. Vorotnikov, *Terrorism: Causes, Consequences, Opportunities to Overcome* (Moscow, 2005).

We believe that these factors prompted the population to turn to various religious views, among which were extremist movements most clearly and actively developing for ethno-religious and ethno-political reasons<sup>14</sup>. Thus, on the territory of the Chechen Republic, the population mainly professes Islam, which, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, united ideological Chechens against the new state – Russia, under the slogan of liberation from “the occupation of Ichkeria by Russian troops”<sup>15</sup>.

Islam in Chechnya contributed to the development of the terrorist movement in Russia. Its followers justify terrorist activity as follows: from the dominant role of ethno-political separatism with elements of the religious community of “fighters for the independence of Ichkeria” (in the 1990s) to the priorities for establishing a world religious order based on “pure Islam” (at the turn of the first decade of the 21st century). Thus, the “terrorist jihad” that arose in Russia in the 1990s is considered as a stage of construction of the first regional and, in the future, world caliphate<sup>16</sup>.

Judging by the development of the ethno-religious situation in the Russian North Caucasus, the main tasks of the activities of terrorist organizations were to destabilize the political and religious situation not only in this region, but also in Russia as a whole. Unfortunately, in the 1990s, the Muslim population living in the North Caucasus tried to separate the border territories and spread the ideas of “pure Islam”, which led to a decade of anti-terrorist measures involving the armed forces and the police. One of the means of spreading “pure Islam” was terrorism, which took a dominant position in the spectrum of methods of activity of militant Islamists<sup>17</sup>.

It is worth noting that religious terrorism, as a social phenomenon and the main type of modern terrorist activity, only reached the forefront of international terrorism in the second half of the 20th century. The main form of it is Islamic terrorism, which, in fact, is what we call modern terrorism. It asserted itself at the end of the 1960s, when the world system of colonialism fell apart and developed countries of the West came into close contact with third world people as a result of intensification of integration and modernization processes accompanied by expansion of migration to the Old World and the New World countries<sup>18</sup>. Supported by different political regimes, on the one hand, and super-profits of oil-producing Arab countries, on the other hand, Islamic terrorism gradually turns into the main and determining factor in modern international terrorism<sup>19</sup>.

As Yu. Chaika noted in his report, “for the first time in 10 years, there has been a decrease in the number of extremist crimes (by 16.8%; 1,265) and a further reduction in acts of a terrorist nature (by 10%; 1,679)”<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> S. S. Oganessian, “On the specifics of the worldview and behavior of religious extremists and terrorists”, *Ugolovno-ispolnitelnaya sistema: pravo, ekonomika, upravlenie* num 2 (2018): 20-23.

<sup>15</sup> V. Yu. Belskii y A.I. Satsuta, *Terrorism in historical retrospective and in the modern conditions* (Moscow: Yuniti-Dana, 2017).

<sup>16</sup> V. Yu. Belskii y A. I. Satsuta, *Terrorism in historical retrospective...*

<sup>17</sup> S. M. Ivanov, *North Caucasus: counterterrorism remains relevant*. Retrieved from: <http://www.arms-expo.ru>

<sup>18</sup> V. Yu. Belskii, A.I. Satsuta, *Terrorism in historical retrospective...*

<sup>19</sup> V. Yu. Belskii, A.I. Satsuta, *Terrorism in historical retrospective...*

<sup>20</sup> Yu. Chaika, Report at a meeting of the Council of the Federation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. 2019. Retrieved from: [https://genproc.gov.ru/smi/interview\\_and\\_appearances/appearances/1590662/](https://genproc.gov.ru/smi/interview_and_appearances/appearances/1590662/)

It appears that the multifaceted nature of genesis and the large-scale spread of terrorism do not allow specialists to work out uniform definitions of such concepts as “terrorism” and “international terrorism”<sup>21</sup>, since at the current stage this phenomenon is determined by a number of factors, the specific features of which depend on the peculiarities of historical development of this phenomenon in different countries.

In addition, historical analysis shows that emergence and expansion of terrorism are natural in the context of ideological vacuum, lack of education in the sphere of information, ideological and religious dissociation of people living in certain territories or states. In this connection, there is a trend towards the participation of traditional religions in the system of counter-terrorism activities since modern terrorism is often based on a religious foundation. Therefore, the propaganda of genuine religious values should become systemic and ubiquitous<sup>22</sup>.

For instance, in the framework of combating terrorism and extremism, the Russian Orthodox Church carries out focused activities in Russia, such as:

- constant religious education, helping people develop in the environment of faith, love for their neighbors, understanding the absolute value of human life, moral education of the society;
- requirement for believers to oppose extremism ideologically;
- prohibiting its adepts to become extremists;
- providing convincing everyday proof that terrorism is not compatible with faith in God;
- wider scope of community services organized in cooperation with the state;
- soothing desperate people who are ready to commit an act of terror.

Based on the conducted retrospective analysis, a few factors that can lead to a wider spread of modern terrorism have been identified<sup>23</sup>:

- structural crisis of the state and its institutions;
- authorities and law losing their status and respect in the eyes of society;
- flaws in legislation;
- weakening of law enforcement agencies, special services and the army;

<sup>21</sup> E. V. Bogmatsera; P. V. Zhesterov; L. V. Glazkova y V. A. Maltsev, “Problems of defining the concept of “terrorism”, *Opcion* Vol: 34 num 85 (2018): 1618-1627 y M. A. Volkova; M. M. Turkin; G. N. Kuleshov y E. V. Bogmatsera, “Correlation of the concepts of “terrorism”, “terrorist act”, and “act of terrorism” in obligations in the law of tort”, *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering* Vol: 8 num 3 (2019): 7166-7170.

<sup>22</sup> T. P. Batorova, “Interaction of state and religion in the Russian empire and USSR: philosophical, sociological, historical and legal aspects”, *European Journal of Science and Theology* Vol: 13 num 5 (2017): 71-81.

<sup>23</sup> Z. Sh. Matchanova, *Factors affecting the spreading of terrorism in modern Russia: criminological analysis: thesis for a Ph.D. in Law* (St. Petersburg: 2015).



- attempts at intervention made by other countries in order to promote their interests;
- socio-economic inequality;
- declining living standards;
- unemployment;
- lack of social security; anxiety experienced by a significant share of the population;
- marginalization of certain social groups;
- intolerance and xenophobia (ethnic, religious, ideological, etc.);
- spread of religious extremism;
- growing separatist sentiments, etc.

Such a situation provides favorable conditions for so-called “ethnopolitical management” that implies a possibility of usage of terrorist organizations and movements by interested countries to affect the state of affairs in order to extend their influence on a certain strategically important region<sup>24</sup>.

Unfortunately, religious citizens often succumb to the influence of extremist organizations and are used to achieve this goal.

## Conclusions

To sum up, the issues of genesis and evolution of terrorism, its interpretation and characteristics as a phenomenon still remain relevant problems relating not only to the general theory terrorism but also to its constantly changing practices — tactics and strategies of modern terrorism as a global problem of the modern age. Each new generation of researchers who study this extremely controversial and divisive social phenomenon resolve these problems in their own way depending on the general trends in the development of current socio-political and religious processes in the international arena and in every single country.

It is planned to carry out further research in order to develop suggestions aimed at the creation of conditions that will prevent the spread of terrorism depending on the legal and religious system.

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