

An Examination into the Nature and Extent of Terrorism in Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Terrorism remains a major threat to the national, regional and global peace and security. It has become a central and controversial issue of global attention. International consensus is growing on the best way forward to counter-terrorism. In Kenya, the influence of the National Police Service (NPS) in Countering Terrorism significantly increased when Al-Qaida bombed the United States of America embassy in August 1998. This led to the formation of the National Intelligence Service (NIS) and Kenya was added to the United State Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program (USATAP). The purpose of the study was to assess the nature and extent of terrorism in Kenya. The study was guided by the economic theory of rational choice of terrorism to explain the economic rationale behind prevalence of terrorist activities in Kenya. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. The study site was police stations within Nairobi County. Both the probability and nonprobability strategies were used in the study: systematic random sampling technique for police officers, purposive sampling for key informants and snowballing sampling for terrorism survivors. Data were collected from a sample of 311 respondents using semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides. Data analysis was done using the descriptive statistic, using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. The study found out that political instability in neighbouring countries and porous borders makes Kenya an attractive target and an easy conduit for terrorist-related materiel, activities, and transit points The study concludes that to prevent conflicts and by extension terrorism, the priority must be given in addressing underlying root causes of conflicts such as poverty, unemployment, human rights violations, injustices, corruptions, marginalization and impunity. The study recommended that the NPS should increase public participation in CT. (278 words)

Keywords: terrorism, national police service, nature, extent, prevalence of terrorism

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Terrorism remains a major threat to national, regional, and international peace and security. Acts of terror are purposefully designed to scare people and make them fearful for the safety of their community and their loved ones. The incidents are random, unpredictable, and intentional targeting of defenseless individuals. When these events occur, it is common to feel anxious and concerned about the future.



At the global scene, terrorism groups have continued to expand. For instance; the Islamic State of Iraq, the Levant (ISIL), and its affiliate have expanded into 15 new countries. More so, Boko Haram which was formerly in Nigeria is also currently in Niger, Cameroon and Chad. In the United States of America (USA), the federal government has adopted a series of counter-terrorism (CT) measures since September 11, 2001, when the Twin Towers in York and the Pentagon Building in Washington DC were attacked by terrorists. These include enactment of Financial Anti-terrorism Act; Bioterrorism Act; Preparedness against Domestic Terrorism Act; Aviation Security Enhancement Act; Airline Security Act; Bioterrorism Preparedness Act; USA Security Act and USA PATRIOT (Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism) Act. The USA PATRIOT enhanced the capacity of police and other security agencies capacity to redefine terrorism, conduct surveillance, gather intelligence and determine crimes and penalties (Chang, 2003). Another significant anti-terrorist measure adopted in the USA after September 11, 2001, was the creation of the Office of Homeland security, which aims to develop and coordinate the implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to secure the USA from terrorist threats or attacks (Kuto, 2004). Other related organizations and initiatives have also emerged, including the Anti-Terrorism Task Force, Custom Trade Partnership against Terrorism, and Citizen Corps (Shamsul, 2002).

The European Commission adopted the framework decision on combating terrorism in 2001, which prescribed the definition of terrorism, the extent of penalties and sanctions, extradition procedures and means of exchanging information to be followed by member states of European Union (EU). Before the September 11 attack, the EU created a special counterterrorism preparatory group in 1997 to formulate European police (Europol) (Mathieu, 2006). The Treaty of Amsterdam extended Europol mandate to include CT tasks (Rauchs and Koenig, 2006). The importance of Europol in the fight against terrorism was reiterated in the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council of September 21, 2001, and the Council's instruction was essentially aimed to elevate Europol to effective information and intelligence exchange medium. In the aftermath of 9/11, Europol's counterterrorist mandate was further expanded to gain the authority to ask police forces of EU to launch investigations and to share information with the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) (Ratzel, 2007) and other third parties, including Interpol and other professional police organizations, as well as police of non-EU states (John, 2007).

In Africa, continental efforts in preventing and combating terrorism have a long history. In 1992, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (now Africa Union), meeting at its 28th Ordinary Session, held in Dakar, Senegal, adopted a Resolution on the Strengthening of Cooperation and Coordination among African States in which the Union pledged to fight the phenomena of extremism and terrorism (Cilliers, Jakkie & Kathryn, 2002).

As part of the implementation of the 2002 Plan of Action, the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism(ACSRT), was established in 2004 in Algiers to serve as a structure for centralizing information, studies and analyses on terrorism and terrorist groups and to develop Counter-Terrorism capacity building programmes (Makinda, 2003). The ACSRT also provides a forum for interaction and cooperation between the Member States and Regional Mechanisms. The Centre plays an important role in guiding the AU's CT efforts and works in collaboration with a number of regional and international partners to ensure coherent and coordinated CT efforts in the continent ((Cilliers, Jakkie & Kathryn, 2002).

The influence of the NPS in Countering Terrorism increased significantly in Kenya when the US embassy was bombed in August 1998. The National Intelligence Service (NIS) was established following the embassy bombings and Kenya was added to the United State Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program (USATAP) (Mogire & Agade, 2011). The addition to USATAP was largely a formality and no significant funding was dispersed until several years later (Aronson, 2012). This was, nevertheless, a statement made by both America and Kenya to reiterate their joint fight against terrorism. Since 2002, The USATAP has trained more than five hundred Kenyan Security officials in the USA and many more in USA designated training facilities throughout East Africa (Ploch, 2010). The Kenyan Government has also created an Anti-Terror Police Unit (ATPU), a Joint Terrorism Task Force (Aronson, 2012), a National Counter-Terrorism Centre, and a National Security Advisory Committee.

Nairobi being the capital and the largest city in Kenya presents a wide variety of policing needs necessitated by high population, high concentration of business as well as headquarters for most national and international organizations in Kenya, Africa and the world. Whereas effective policing is an important prerequisite for effective prevention of terrorism, it may still be challenged by inadequate organizational capacity, ineffective partnership, inadequate crime prevention and problem-solving strategies. This underlines the need to carry out this study on the Influence of the NPS in Countering Terrorism in Kenya with specific reference to Nairobi County.



1.2 Statement of the Problem

Terrorism is a challenge for law enforcement in Kenya. Over time, it has been mutating to the extent that law enforcement agencies have to keep well-informed development in terrorism networks (Aronson. 2012). Kenya has had its share of terrorist attacks. The most notable was the 7th August 1998 USA embassy bombing where 213 lives were lost. Since then the NPS has put in place strategies for Counter-terrorism. Inspite of efforts by NPS, subsequent attacks in Kenya include the Kikambala bomb attack on 28th November 2002 in Mombasa County, which resulted in 13 deaths; Westgate Mall attack on 21st September 2013 where 67 lives were lost and Garissa University attack where over150 lives were lost (David and McKnight, 2015). The core research question for this study was therefore, what is the nature and extent of terrorism in Kenya.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The study sought to assess the nature and extent of Terrorism in Kenya.

2.1 The Nature and Extent of Terrorism in Kenya

Terrorism, as argued by Wong (2006), has a political aspect and involves acts of violence, which intends to bring about political change by influencing the political behaviour of governments, communities or specific groups. In addition, he considers terrorism as a phenomenon that is global in its range, constant in its presence and inevitably involves the commission of a crime. Any national or international mechanism to CT must be predicated on that understanding of terrorism. Wong (2006) distinguishes terrorism from other elements of crime on the basis that it plans to propagate a climate of extreme fear amongst its audience. The act of terror extends beyond the immediate victim.

Kenya for its role in the Global War on Terror and 2011 military invasion of Somalia, there have been frequent small-scale attacks, exemplifying that the surrounding threats to regional security. The choice of Kenya is not random by terrorists but several factors that contribute to making Kenya an attractive target. These, in turn, make Kenya a priority for the Global War on Terror. These factors include; geography, Poverty and unemployment, unstable neighbours, Islamism, and Insufficient Law Enforcement and Counterterrorism Policies (Adan, 2005).

Kenya's strategic location makes it a significant gateway from the Middle East and South Asia to East Africa and the Horn of Africa. This combination of infrastructure and porous borders makes Kenya an attractive target and an easy conduit for terrorist-related materiel, activities, and transit points (Barkan, 2000). Poverty and widespread unemployment have made Kenyan youths vulnerable to Indoctrination and recruitment for terrorist activities. Kenya has a young population (40.6 per cent are under the age of 15) and an unemployment rate of 40 per cent (CIA 2004). Further, he invasion of Somalia by the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) re-amplified an already tenuous relationship between Muslims in the Horn of Africa and the Kenyan government. This offensive into southern Somalia, known as *Operation Linda Nchi* (Swahili for "Protect the Country"), has been used as the basis for nearly all of the transnational violence directed at Kenya since the offensive began on October 2011.

Islamism has also been blamed for terrorism. Mathieu (2012) defines Islamism as a movement of Muslims who think back to earlier times and seek to return to the fundamentals of the religion. They seek to eliminate (what they perceive to be) "corrupting" non-Islamic influences from every part of their lives (Roy, 1998). Further lax law enforcement has made Kenya easily accessible to terrorist's organizations. The Global War on Terrorism has dismantled terrorist sanctuaries, particularly in the Middle East and South Asia, resulting in terrorists moving to Kenya, which has a relatively lax security system. This, coupled with flawed terrorism laws in Kenya have caused grave problems and even with improved legislation over the last few years, success has been minimal.

The Kenyan government defines terrorism as "anti-state violent activities undertaken by non-state entities which are motivated by religious goals" (Mogire & Agade, 2011). This definition neglects terrorism based on political, ideological, and criminal rationales and thus, places an unfair target on the minority religion in Kenya. The lack of this comprehensive legislation puts Kenyan law enforcers in positions where they perform questionable means and violate the human rights of many in the Muslim community. Intelligence officials accused numerous times of unlawfully detaining suspected terrorists for lengthy periods and torturing suspects in attempts to gain confessions and further intelligence (Peterson, 2007).



2.4 Conceptual Framework

The economic theory of rational choice of terrorism was critical to the study in explaining the economic rationale behind which terrorists engage in terrorist activities. Moreover, the theory brings out the idea of weighing the balance between the benefit and repercussion as a result of engaging in terrorist activities. In the event that an anticipating terrorist realizes the benefits will be more than the repercussion, the decision to plan and engage in terrorist threats and experiences remains a big challenge for law enforcement and the need for study on the influence of NPS in CT.

The theory was important as it reveals terrorist decisions can be born out of consideration for anti-terrorist strategies in place. Bueno de Mesquita (2005) presented a model to argue that, although the evidence regarding the socio-economic status of individuals terrorist is of considerable interest, it does not entail the conclusion that poverty is not an important determinant of terrorist mobilization. The key assumption in Bueno de Mesquita (2005) model is that, terrorist organization screen potential recruits on a "terrorist ability" dimension that is positively related to socioeconomic status (better-educated people make better terrorists). Benmelech and Berrebi (2006) present empirical evidence to show that better educated-terrorists are indeed more effective in carrying out difficult tasks.

The Economic theory of rational choice does not give practical evidence as to conditions under which terrorists will drop their plans under consideration of repercussions, what happens in the event that the repercussions of terrorist activities outweigh the perceived benefits. Terrorists may consider that mechanisms made to identify and punish them according to the law outweigh positive contributions to their urge to seek public attention. In the case where the repercussions because of policing strategies are perceived to have, less effect compared to the perceived benefits of terrorist activities. The trends in the occurrence of terrorist activities reveal a predictable future increase in terrorism activities if the fight against terrorism is not stepped up to reverse the situation. This is why the study focused on the influence of NPS in countering terrorism in Kenya based on rational choice theory.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study area was Nairobi County, Kenya. It is home to thousands of Kenya's business and over 100 international companies. The City was considered for this study because of the diversity of policing strategies employed and the vulnerability of the area to crime. A descriptive survey design formed the basis for this study. Kombo and Tromp (2007) aver that, vdescriptive studies involve measurement, classification, analysis, comparison, and interpretation of data. The descriptive research design was ideal because the study endeavoured to obtain information on what exists concerning the study objective.

The target population comprised police officers, senior state officers in the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, survivors of the terrorist attack and members of the civil society. The study used both probability and non-probability strategies. Probability sampling is one in which every unit in the population has a chance of being selected in the sample (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Non-probability sampling is any sampling method where some elements of the population have a chance of selection or where the probability of selection cannot be accurately determined (Kombo & Tromp, 2007).

The selection of police stations was done using probability-sampling techniques. Systematic random sampling was used to sample 30% of the 18 police stations in the county. This sample size according to Kothari (2004) recommendation is adequate for sampling a small population. This gave six police stations for study.

Kombo and Tromp (2007) aver that, stratified random sampling involves dividing the population into homogenous sub-groups and then taking a simple random sample in each subgroup. In the study, police officers were placed in their respective departments. These included; department of criminal justice, police patrol, community policing, intelligence-led and general duty office (report office). Purposive sampling was used to select the officers' in-charge of police stations. According to Wooldridge (2003), purposive sampling is a sample selected in a deliberate and non-random fashion to achieve a certain goal. Purposive sampling was also used to sample the civil societies who are responsible for offering humanitarian assistance to victims of terrorist attacks. The study selected Kenya Red Cross and St John Ambulance. The two organizations were sampled because of the significant role they played in offering humanitarian assistance to victims of terrorism. Snowball sampling was used in sampling the survivors of terrorism attack. Snowball sampling is a non-probability



sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances (Kombo and Tromp, 2007).

Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from police officers, senior state officers in the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, survivors of terrorist attacks and members of civil society. The questionnaires had both closed and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions had choices from which the respondents were to choose one alternative. Open-ended questions were to allow for an in-depth response. As the questionnaires were being filled in, the researcher proceeded to conduct the interview. Interviews were administered to senior state officers in the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, 10 survivors of a terrorist attack and 2 members of civil society. The interview schedules had both structured and open-ended questions. The structured questions were used to get specific answers from the respondents. Open-ended questions were to enable the respondents to express their views on the topic of the study freely and openly. In the interview, the researcher was able to probe the respondents further to get an indepth response and clarify unclear items in the interview guide. Face to face interview atmosphere further enabled the researcher to decode the body language of the respondents.

Data were analyzed through quantitative and qualitative techniques. The quantitative analysis involved the use of numerical measures to evaluate the effect of an aspect of the Influence of the National Police Service in counterterrorism. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic interpretation in accordance with the main objectives of the study, which were then presented in narrative excerpts within the report.

4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The study addressed the following areas in exploring the nature and extent of terrorism in Kenya; the geographical location, poverty and unemployment, unstable neighbours, Islamism, insufficient law enforcement and counter-terrorism policies.

4.1 Geographical location of Kenya

The study sought to find out if the geographical location of Kenya predisposes the country to terrorism activities. Kenya shares boundaries with five countries, most of which have experienced civil unrest for a long time with spillover to Kenya. The results are shown in Table 4.1.

Table: 4. 1: Geographical location of Kenya

Geographical location	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	126	41.2
Agree	87	28.4
Neutral	30	9.8
Disagree	24	7.8
Strongly disagree	39	12.7
Total	306	100.0

Table 4.1 shows that majority 126 (41.2%) strongly agreed that the geographical location predisposes Kenya to terrorist attack while 24 (7.8%) disagreed. This shows that Kenya is relatively easy to enter and travel within undetected, because of its porous borders shared with its five neighbours, and largely unmonitored coastline. These findings conform to the study by Barkan (2000) whom they argued that the combination of poor



infrastructure and porous borders makes Kenya an attractive target and an easy conduit for terrorist-related materiel, activities, and transit points.

4.2 Poverty and unemployment

The study sought to find out if poverty and unemployment contribute to terrorism in Kenya. Poverty and widespread unemployment have made Kenyan youths vulnerable to indoctrination and recruitment to terrorist activities. The findings are shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2: Poverty and unemployment

	Frequency	Percentage	
Strongly agree	153	50.0	
Agree	105	34.3	
Neutral	15	4.9	
Disagree	21	6.9	
Strongly disagree	12	3.9	
Total	306	100.0	

Source: Author, 2019

Table 4.2 shows, half 153 (50%) of the respondents strongly agree that poverty and unemployment contribute greatly to terrorism in Kenya while 12 (3.9%) strongly disagree. These indicate that youth are susceptible to indoctrination and recruitment for terrorist activities. Kenya has a young population (40.6% under the age of 15) and an unemployment rate of 40 per cent (CIA 2004). The findings support those of Shaykhutdinov & Achilov (2012) who established that many of radicalized Muslims that come from European countries exist in lower social-economic areas and status of the society and that it might play a part in radicalization. On the one hand, for example, Malik, Halstead, Bunglawala & Spalek (2004) posits that the economic situation of a country has a negative relationship on the rise of terrorism or radicalization. The authors assert that where there is economic deprivation whether permanently or seasonal, there is a higher likelihood for radical activities and terrorism to increase in the society.

4.3 Instability in neighbouring countries

The study sought to find out whether instability in neighbouring countries contributes to terrorism activities in Kenya. Some of these countries had experienced political and civil unrest for a long period. Data were collected, analyzed and results presented in Table 4.3.

Table: 4. 3: Instability in Neighboring Countries

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	135	44.1
Neutral	45	14.7
Disagree	27	8.8
Strongly disagree	15	4.9
Total	306	100.0



Table 4.3 shows that 135 (44.1%) respondents strongly agree that unstable neighbours contribute to terrorism in Kenya while 84 (27.5%) agreed. These indicate that instability in these countries has created a lawless society where crime and radical ideologies flourished. Lacking state capacity since that time has allowed unrestricted movement of people and goods into and out of Country. While many of these people were refugees seeking a better life in Kenya as well as a number of terrorists. With a porous border and a confirmed presence of Islamic fundamentalists, this poses a threat to Kenya.

Somalia, for example, continues to play a direct role in the security deficiencies of Kenya. For one, Somalia's geographic location gives it the longest coastline in Africa and makes it the closest African country to the Middle East. This allows Somalia to act as a transit hub in bringing illicit items into Kenya (Mogire & Agade, 2011).

4.4 Islamism and Terrorism

The study sought to establish how Islamism contributes to terrorism in Kenya. Fundamentalism can lead to growing dissent among the Muslim population, making them easy recruits for terrorist activities. The findings are displayed in Table 4.4.

Table: 4. 4: Islamism and terrorism

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	85	27.8
Agree	90	29.4
Neutral	68	22.2
Disagree	33	10.8
Strongly disagree	30	9.8
Total	306	100.0

From the findings in Table 4.9 above the majority of respondents, 90 (29.4%) agree that Islamism contributes to terrorism in Kenya while 85(27.8%) strongly agree. These show that Kenyans are being exposed to Islamism. This encroachment has resulted in making them easy recruits for terrorist activities. In Kenyan mosques, individual Imams preach about perceived injustice to their Muslim brothers. Aided by technology, in the form of the Internet, satellite TV, and Kenyan's increased travel and employment around the globe are able to spread this ideologist. These findings agree with Mogire and Agade (2011) who stated that in Kenyan mosques, individual Imams preach about perceived injustice to their Muslim brothers in Afghanistan, the unresolved Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and the ongoing war in Iraq. Aided by technology, in the form of the Internet, satellite TV, and Kenyan's increased travel and employment around the globe, Muslims in Kenya are becoming more globally aware. Individual Imams are using this increased global awareness to encourage Kenyan empathy with more extreme views of the needs, hardships, and philosophies of their core religion worldwide.

4.5 Inadequate Enforcement of Counterterrorism Laws and Policies

The study sought to find out from the respondents whether insufficient laws enforcement and counterterrorism policies contribute to terrorism in Kenya. The flawed terrorism laws in Kenya had pretentious police mandates in their role in counter-terrorism. Results are presented in Table 4.5.



Table: 4.5: Inadequate enforcement of counter-terrorism laws and policies

	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	80	26.1
Agree	124	40.5
Neutral	45	14.7
Disagree	36	11.8
Strongly disagree	21	6.9
Total	306	100.0

In table 4.5, majority 124 (40.5 %) of the respondents agree that inadequate enforcement of CT laws and policies are a major barrier to counter-terrorism in Kenya. While 80 (26.1%) strongly agree and 21(6.9%) strongly disagrees. This lack of comprehensive legislation puts Kenyan law enforcers in positions where they perform questionable means and violate the human rights of many in the Muslim community.

The findings agree with the study by Mogire & Agade (2011) who indicated that lack of comprehensive legislation put Kenyan law enforcers in positions where they perform questionable means and violate the human rights of many in the Muslim community. Kenya transferred 13 Kenyan citizens suspected of taking part in the attacks to Uganda (Peterson, 2007).

4.6 Respondent Opinion on Nature and Extent of Terrorism

The study further sought from the respondents their opinion on the nature and extent of terrorism as shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Respondent opinion on nature and extent of terrorism in Kenya

	Frequency	Percentage
Youth radicalization	120	39.2
Lack of accountability	39	12.7
High poverty levels	36	11.8
Corruption	36	11.8
Weak judicial system	21	6.9
Total	306	100.0

Table 4.6 shows that majority, 120 (39.2%) of the respondents observed that youth radicalization influenced terrorism more, while 54 (17.6%) said political dissatisfaction was the major cause. This is because the majorities of the youth are unemployed and have developed anger due to politics. An interview with a member of civil society revealed that there was a decline in terrorist attacks in major towns in Kenya, though there was an increase in such attacks in North Eastern and coastal region. Actors point out to radicalized foreigners mostly from Somalia and Kenya from all parts of the country. An interview with a senior state officer in the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government revealed that there had been a general trend of terrorism declined in the past years though the threat is still high in North-Eastern and Coastal regions especially along the Kenyan Somalia boarder.

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the Findings

The results revealed that Kenya is relatively easy to enter and travel within undetected, because of its porous borders shared with its five neighbours, and it is the long, largely unmonitored coastline. The combination of political instability in neighbouring countries and porous borders makes Kenya an attractive target and an easy conduit for terrorist-related materiel, activities, and transit points. Although there is a decline in terrorist attacks in major towns in Kenya, North
Eastern and the coastal region have experienced increase in such attacks. Actors point out to radicalized foreigners mostly from Somalia and Kenya from all parts of the country. The



study agrees with Adan (2005) findings that Poverty and unemployment, unstable neighbours, Islamism and insufficient law enforcement and counterterrorism policies are the main factors that predispose a country to terrorism.

5.2 Conclusions

Geography location of Kenya, poverty and unemployment, unstable neighbours, Islamism, poverty, are among the factors that contribute to the rise in terrorism in Kenya. The study concludes that to prevent conflicts and by extension terrorism, the priority must be given in addressing underlying root causes of conflicts such as poverty, unemployment, human rights violations, injustices, corruptions, marginalization and impunity. Kenya being a major player in fostering peace and stability in the region should co-operate with her neighbours in promoting socio-economic development in the region.

5.3 Recommendations

The study recommends that, to prevent terrorism, Kenya should prioritize addressing underlying the root causes of conflicts such as poverty, unemployment, human rights violations, injustices, corruptions, marginalization and impunity through sustainable development thus improving socio-economic infrastructure. The government should enact laws governing border control, terrorism to enable police to deal with terrorism effectively.

5.4 Suggestion for Further Research

The study suggests that a further research is done on the counter-radicalization for the youths. This would entail understanding factors that make youth vulnerable to radicalization. The goal of the study would be to identify socio-economic factors and ways to mitigate this problem.

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