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paper text:

A Comparison of Obama's 2007 and Hillary Clinton's 2015 Bids for Presidency

4

Speech

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6

This article sought to study Barack Obama's 2007 bid for Presidency as found in his Announcement Speech and Hillary Rodham Clinton's 2015 bid for Presidency as found in her (First) Campaign Launch Speech. It focused on how both used

the central ideas and their development into the main ideas of the speeches

7

to declare the intention and motivation for their bids for the President of the U.S.A. The research raised some questions whether both speeches had things in common or not as the two politicians were running the presidential race along the Democratic Party's path.

□

The research method used **qualitative content analysis to** decipher the core meaning **of**

5

the

speeches by means of new **analytical narratives** viewed **in** terms **of some rhetorical strategies. Then,**

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it attempted to arrive at some interpretation of the

underlying thought of the speeches focusing on **the**

2

central ideas, and from there proceeded to identify their elaboration into the main ideas. The article showed that both Obama and Clinton had things in common as they attempted to earn the support of Americans of all backgrounds. They defended the cause of the middle class economy. Obama focused more on a coalition of Americans of diverse background and change, whereas Clinton focused more on furthering the middle class economy by means the four fights: strengthening economy, strengthening families, increasing opportunities, and furthering the American democracy. Keywords:

Obama's and Clinton's bids for Presidency

4

Obama's and Clinton's presidential

9

campaign speeches,

Obama's and Clinton's presidential

9

race 1. Introduction It is very common for politicians who intend to run for presidential race to take time to announce officially their candidacies. In American politics, such candidates usually allow themselves enough time before they embark vigorously on their campaign trails throughout the country. Both Barack Obama and Hillary Rodham Clinton (henceforth referred to respectively as Obama and Clinton) were rivals in their attempts to

win the Democratic Party's official nomination

14

for the 2008 U.S. Presidential election.

Obama defeated Clinton to win the Democratic Party's nomination

10

and finally could win the race to the White House after defeating his Republican rival, John McCain. As Obama's second term of Presidential office was drawing to its end, people's questions had lingered as whether Clinton was about to run for the 2016 Presidential election to make a history of the would-be first female President of the U.S.A. riding on the Democratic ticket or not. Obama himself showed his consent and support for Clinton's run (cf. AFP & Associate Press, 2015). Indeed, Hillary herself has been in public view on the national level in more than two consecutive decades: first as first lady when Clinton was the U.S. President for two terms of office. Then she served two terms in elected public office as a Senator from New York. After she was defeated by Obama in the presidential race, to her party's and comrades' astonishment, she accepted Obama's offer to serve as Secretary of State in his Administration. With a long record of experience, at least for the time being she stood unmatched within her own party. 1.1. Scope of the Research The

scope of this research **is on rhetoric and discourse**

1

study by its inquiry into both Obama's and Clinton's

carefully scripted texts of the rhetorical craft to communicate their
persuasive political thought and goal **in** their bids for **the**

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U.S. President. The research was focused on the core meaning of both figures'

invention of the **central ideas and their further elaboration into some**
sets of the **main ideas**

1

to communicate their **arguments in** their respective **bid for the** President **of**
the U.S.

1

A. This research used the term "style of political communication"

to mean as a **distinct way of using language for creating some effect to**
achieve political goals

1

(cf. Verdonk, 2002, p. 5,6) . 2. Theories This research picked up the central ideas because it is synonymous with "invention" - the first out of the five canons of rhetoric (cf.

Beebe & Beebe, 2009, p. 447; cf. Hesford & Brueggemann, 2007, pp. 36-40; cf. De Beaugrande & Dressler, 1990, p.14; cf. Leith & Myerson, 1989, p. 15

1

) from which it is then developed to become a complete text in terms of a set of main ideas. For identifying the rhetorical canon of “invention”,

this paper used the rhetorical construct of

1

“the central idea of a speech”- which is the underlying thought of the speech expressed in “a one-sentence summary of the speech content”

(cf. Beebe & Beebe, 2009, p. 31), to decipher **the** core meaning **of** both **Obama’s**

1

and Clinton’s bids for the U.S. Presidency. For that purpose, the

analytical narratives were used to deconstruct the scripts of the speeches to arrive at some underlying thought of each speech. The same processes also helped identify the “main ideas” of the speeches as further development of the central ideas into the

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key points of the speech

in the text-making processes (cf. Beebe & Beebe, 2009,

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pp. 30-32). This paper was to examine

how these constructs were used to organize the meaning resources in order to communicate both political figures’ lines of thought and political goals in

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their respective speech as undertaken in this study (cf. Verdonk, 2002; cf. Thornborrow, 2002; cf. Becker, 1977). A close scrutiny into the

organization of the meaning resources was also made possible by

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means **of** some **rhetorical techniques (Leanne, 2010),**

among other things, the means to introduce an effective ice-breaker to audience in the light of

establishing common ground for breaking down barriers (pp. 15, 16, 63

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), sending a message that could earn a speaker's wider audience by

achieving transcendence (pp. 42,43), conveying vision through personalization

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by means of down-to-earth everyday example of ordinary life (p. 17), sending a message that could be easily grasped by common people by personalizing the messages (pp. 74-76), sending a message related to audience's shared experience and familiarity by evoking its relation to events or iconic characters in history (pp. 48, 49, 82, 83), using resonating words or phrases from political lexicon by

borrowing words from iconic figures in the history (pp. 22, 56, 59), as well as ending a speech by creating a strong

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sense of determination and involvement on the part of audience by

using a crescendo and leaving a strong impression (pp. 18, 19). 3.

1

Sources of **Data** and Data The **sources** of the data **for this** article **were Obama's**

2007 bid for the U.S. President known as his Announcement Speech (Obama, 2007a). The prepared text was delivered against the backdrop of the old State Capitol Building in Springfield, Illinois (2007b). Meanwhile, Clinton's 2015 bid for the U.S. President in this research was taken to mean as her first campaign launch speech to run for the 2016 presidential race (Clinton, 2015b). The prepared text was delivered on June 13, 2015 in Roosevelt Island, New York, two months after her official announcement to run for the 2016 US president (Clinton, 2015a; cf. Lisa, 2015). The data were respectively Obama's and Clinton's central idea and main ideas in their bids for Presidency. 4. Methods The research used qualitative content analysis as it analysed the qualitative data of the content of both Obama's and Clinton's respective speech to uncover their respective central idea that made up

some sets of their main ideas in communicating their respective political thought and goals (cf. Krippendorff, 2004, pp. 16-30; cf. Schreier, 2013, pp. 1-8, 30). Krippendorff (2004, p. 16,17)

1

gives a label to

such an approach as being interpretive, because it requires a close reading of both speeches and

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rearticulating them into new analytical narratives. The method consists of the following steps: a close reading and rearticulating the

content of both speeches; determining the research questions to

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focus on the inquiry related to the

rhetoical craft to communicate the texts' persuasive political thought and goals in the

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ways each expressed the bid for the U.S. President; attempting some degree of interpretation of both texts; answering the research questions; and finally conclusion- drawing and verification of the findings

(cf. Krippendorff , 2004, pp. 29, 30).

2

In the data analysis, the techniques of data reduction ocured as the research was to focus on both Obama's

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and Clinton's

rhetoical craft to communicate their political thought and goals in terms of the central ideas and key ideas in

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their bids for the U.S. President. For this purpose, the researcher made some

interpretation to arrive at the core meaning of both characters' styles of political communication as expressed in the central idea and main ideas of both speeches (cf. Schreier, 2013, pp. 4, 30). For verification of the findings, the researcher

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enlisted some input

from colleagues majoring in American studies and politics

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from a forum group discussion 5. Findings and Discussion 5.1 Central Idea: Obama's Announcement Speech Obama announced to run the presidential race on February 10, 2007 in Springfield, Illinois. His Announcement Speech was delivered against the backdrop of the Old Capitol Building that symbolically linked his figure to the historically iconic figure related to the site – Abraham Lincoln – the father of the American unity who rose to the national leadership as the U.S. president. To establish common ground and linkages with his audience, Obama appreciated his audience's participation in his "journey for a reason" by appreciating their participation resonating his message of their power and unity as one people to build a more perfect union. So, Obama's Announcement Speech against this backdrop sent the message to the American audience that his "improbable quest" for presidency was part of the long journey for a better unified America having been started by his predecessor. Part of that journey how he came about joining the presidential race, Obama spoke about the American values of hard work for a better and greater cause shared by most Americans. He personalized the values by a grass-root narrative of his initial career as a community organizer to play "a small part in building a better America" in Chicago's poorest neighborhoods. He mentioned that Springfield had become the best education for him. He went to law school, served as

a civil right **lawyer, taught constitutional law, and** then became a

3

senator from the region. Later he was motivated to enter into politics as he had learned that there were things that could not be solved on the local level but only on a higher political level. Springfield had taught him to know more about the decency of the American people, through which they could build a more hopeful America. Against the backdrop of the Old Capital Building associated with the iconic figure of Abraham Lincoln, Obama announced to run for the U.S. President. He was determined to carry through the goal that the ways of Washington would have to change. Obama reminded his audience that the American government was apt

to be changed **to be more responsive to the needs of the people.**

1

People who loved their country could change it. Each generation had their own calls. He reminded his audience that they were called to change the ways of Washington – the failed policies and the broken politics of the ruling party. Through the American legacies, they together as one people were capable of meeting whatever challenges. Obama's message was soaring high as he was referencing to history and his audience's familiarity. No less important was how Obama also irresistibly enforced the strength of America as stated by the intertextuality between the white tradition by citing Abraham Lincoln – "a tall, gangly, self-made Springfield lawyer" and that of the Black tradition by citing Martin King Luther Jr. as he powerfully insisted on "a King's call to let justice roll down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream". Obama's message became transcendent as he was emphasizing the people's commonalities – facing and solving their common challenges and problems – the failed policies and the broken politics – together as one people. To his audience's awareness, the message of a coalition of the people of diverse backgrounds

to meet their common problems and challenges was foregrounded. He was underscoring the awareness that the campaign was not only his, but about things that they – he and the people – could do together to bring in change. Using the historically iconic figure Abraham Lincoln and borrowing his resonating words, Obama underscored his plea for the American unity and their mission together to transform the nation. Obama ended his speech using the rhetorical technique of

a crescendo and leaving **a strong impression on the part of his audience** **to** 1

take actions joining his “improbable cause”

to take up “the unfinished job of perfecting (the) union, and building a better America”. Based on **the** 15

core content of

the analytical narrative above, the central idea of Obama’s Announcement **Speech can,** therefore, **be** 1

gathered that: “Only a broader coalition of Americans of the most diverse backgrounds can work to bring about change and unified force to overcome the American common problems”. 5.2. Main Ideas: Obama’s Announcement Speech The following is a table of the speech organization containing the

main ideas of Obama’s Announcement **Speech:** 2

Table 1 The Speech Organization of

the Main Ideas in Obama’s Presidential Announcement **Speech** **Speech** 5
Organization **of the**

Main Ideas 1 OPENING Appreciation for joining a journey with the spirit of one people for a better America
2 BODY Nonpartisan journey and the decency of the American people to build a more hopeful America
Reminding Americans of the need to work together to bring about political change
Calling all Americans to work together to address their common challenges
With the spirit of one people, Obama ran for President

to take up the unfinished work **of perfecting** the **Union.** 3

3 CLOSING Plea for full support from all Americans 5.3. Foregrounded Message of

Obama's Style of Political Communication

2

By reading and comparing carefully and critically the existing main ideas of the speech, the foregrounded message

of Obama's political communication in the

2

speech can be inferred as follows: Table 2 Foregrounded Message of

Obama's Style of Political Communication in his

1

Announcement Speech A journey with the spirit of one people for a better America Making Americans aware of the values of nonpartisan journey

and the power of the decency of the **American people to**

1

build a more hopeful America Making Americans aware of the need to work together to bring about political change about political change Calling all Americans to work together to address their common challenges With the spirit of one people, Obama ran for President

to take up the unfinished work **of perfecting** the **Union**

3

Plea for full support from all Americans 5.4. Central Idea: Clinton's First Campaign Launch Speech

Clinton's first campaign launch speech was delivered **on June 13, 2015**

12

in a political rally, two months after her official announcement to run the presidential race by means of social media (Clinton, 2015a). The choice of the site on the park in Roosevelt Island, New York, could have been intended to evoke the spirit of Franklin D. Roosevelt, of whose legacy Clinton was to follow. She took a position of standing tall as she mentioned the headquarters of the United Nations, a place visible from the site whereby she had represented the U.S.A. for evoking her prior role and experience on the international forum that could be of any advantage to her later as future Commander of Chief. Meanwhile her mention of the phrase "no ceiling" to refer to the open air park was to evoke the image of the metaphor "glass ceiling" referring to the top position that could be seen but career women could not pass it. It reminded her audience of her bid that she could be the next, but first woman president of the U.S.A. Clinton mentioned Roosevelt's enduring vision of America that prosperity had to be built and shared by all. Later in the speech she listed the four fights to follow Roosevelt's steps that became the focus of her campaign: strengthening

the economy, strengthening families, increasing opportunities, renewing the promise of the American democracy. She honored Roosevelt's legacy that was continued by two Democrat presidents, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama; of which she was also determined to keep it going. Her reference to those iconic figures showed her firm foundation to step in. Rhetorically, she was speaking to establish common ground with her audience when she was referencing to history and familiarity. This was to link her bid to her predecessors' legacies of stressing the middle class economy. She also showed that she appeared as a strong politician coming out from deep-rooted tradition as she was borrowing resonating words from Roosevelt's political lexicon such as: equal opportunity, job, security, no special privilege for the few, civil liberties, and standard of living. She resounded America's basic bargain having been held by her democratic predecessors. Clinton personalized the values of hard work and dream of a better future in the America's basic bargain by using tricolons telling her hard-working grandfather in the small business printing drapery fabric that could finally reward him middle class life. The same success was true on the national level as the two presidents, Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, reached their respective Administration's success, as both of them held tightly to the enduring basic bargain of America. She was talking about how to meet new challenges and keep going forward with the economy and democracy. She reminded her audience of the challenges they were facing originated from the false belief of another fundamental vision of economy from another party. She promised that it was time to realize that every body's hard work would pay off. She promised to create prosperity for every American. It was for these reasons she was declaring to run for the U.S. president, not just for few, but all Americans. She was for president and at odds with Republican top-down economic policies. She underscored the so-called inclusive economy, a vision of America that her values and lifetime had taught her. Clinton personalized the kind of hope, perseverance and endurance that every American had in common to meet every challenge. She mentioned that everyday American needed a chance and a champion, and she wanted it to be that champion. She personalized her determination in a narrative of her own scores of experience and work she had been through to show the fact that she was more than ready to be a champion for all Americans alike. She pleaded the support of all Americans to fight for the legacy of the four freedoms. She was to proceed with the American middle class economy for everyday American. She was to strengthen American families in order to strengthen the nation. She was to harness the American ingenuities in order to keep America ahead in peace, security, and prosperity. She was to reform the American government and revitalize the American democracy to better serve everyday Americans. Clinton pleaded the spirit of togetherness to work as one people to build the the nation to win the four fights: building an economy where hard work would pay off, strengthening families, defending the country and increasing opportunity, and renewing the promise of democracy. She reminded that the fight would not be easy. They were going to face challenges as another side would still be promoting another fundamental different vision of America. The job would be hard, but she was quite determined to keep it going. She personalized the importance of the value of perseverance in a narrative of her mother who had taught and reminded her to keep fighting eventhough

the odds were long and the opposition was fierce.

13

Clinton ended her first campaign launch speech building a crescendo reminding his audience that

the story of America was a story of hard-fought and hard-won progress.

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She

left a strong impression on the part of her audience to

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join her in the job of building the nation for their common good – where no body would be left out or left behind. Based on the core content of the analytical narrative of Clinton’s speech above, the central idea of her first campaign launch speech can, therefore, be gathered that: “America had to meet every challenge together as one people to strengthen the rewarding American middle class economy, strengthen families, defend the country and increase opportunity, and renew the promise of democracy”. 5.5. Main Ideas: Clinton’s First Campaign Launch Speech The following is a table of the speech organization containing the main ideas of Clinton’s First Campaign Launch Speech:

Table 3 The Main Ideas of Clinton’s First Campaign Launch Speech

1

OPENING 1 Salutation and

standing tall with the enduring vision of America BODY 2 The enduring values of the American bargain 3 Keeping ahead in economy and democracy 4 Creating prosperity for every American 5 Fighting against unemployment and economic inequalities 6 At odds with Republican top-down economic policies 7 Promoting inclusive economy 8

The potential of every American to face every challenge

11

9 Clinton’s readiness to be a champion for the American people 10 Strengthening the American middle class economy 11 Strengthening American families 12 Maintaining ahead America’s leadership and increasing opportunities 13 Renewing the American democracy 14 With the spirit of one people to keep going the four fights 15 Fighting against anoter fundamental vision of America CLOSING 16 Calling America to keep going forward 5.6. Foregrounded Message of Clinton’s Style of Political Communication By reading and comparing carefully and critically the existing main ideas of the speech, the foregrounded message of Clinton’s style of political communication in the speech can be inferred as follows: Table 4 Foregrounded Message of Clinton’s Style of Political Communication in her First Campaign Launch Speech Making Americans aware of the importance of the American basic bargain to keep forward the American middle class economy Reminding audience of the challenge coming from another fundamental vision of economy Keeping ahead the cause of inclusive economy Convincing Americans of their power to meet every challenge ahead Clinton’s readiness to be a champion for the American people Furthering the four fights: strengthening middle class economy, strengthening families, increasing opportunities, and renewing the American democracy With the spirit of one people to keep going the four fights Calling America to keep going forward 5.7. A Comparison between Obama’s and Clinton’s Central Idea Obama’s central idea focused more on the theme of raising a coalition of Americans of diverse backgrounds by which they could work together to bring about political change to the failed national leadership of his preceeding Republican President and solve the American common problems as part of the job of perfecting the Union. Clinton’s central idea focused more on furthering the American middle class economy of the preceeding Administration motivated by the awareness to keep America’s basic bargain and the readiness with support of Americans as one people to meet new challenges to keep going the four fights: strengthening economy,

strengthening families, increasing opportunities, and furthering American democracy. 5.8. A Comparison between Obama's and Clinton's Main Ideas Both Obama and Clinton shared the same ideology of the Democratic Party. It was for that reason that both kept reminding their prospective voters about the challenges coming from another fundamental vision of America. They both fought for the cause of the American middle class economy. However their political situations were very much different. Obama launched his bid for the president whereby his predecessor was a Republican president, George Bush. Obama was to demand change to his predecessor's failed leadership. It stood to reason that he criticized heavily Bush's failed policies. Clinton was launching her bid for the 2016 presidency whereby her predecessor was Obama – of the same party – under whose first Administration she had served as Secretary of State. Instead of criticizing him, she praised him together with another Democratic president, Bill Clinton, her husband for their honor to the America's basic bargain that made both successful. She was to continue Obama's success. So for Obama, his bid meant to bring about a change from Republican to Democratic fundamental politics. For Clinton, her bid meant to preserve and keep going the implementation of the Democratic vision of economy and politics*1. She underscored the focus of her campaign on furthering the four fights: strengthening economy, strengthening _____ *1 The argument is more convincing especially if Clinton's bid for the 2016 president is analyzed against the backdrop of

Obama's bid for the second term of the U.S. Presidential office

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in his

three speeches: Osawatomie Economic Speech (2011), State of the Union Address (2012a), and Virginia Beach Campaign Speech

1

(2012b). In these speeches Obama underscored his goal

to reclaim the American middle class economy.

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families, defending the country and increasing opportunities, furthering the American democracy. Clinton could be in a worse position to be labeled as a status quo presidential candidate if she was not able to add more to Obama's accomplishment. Obama linked himself as part of procession in history to bring together Americans of most diverse backgrounds

to take up the unfinished job of perfecting the Union.

3

He wanted to earn the support of all Americans as he personalized a romantic narrative of himself that proceeded from a very humble beginning to do a small part to contribute toward a more hopeful America – a nonpartisan narrative shared by the majority of Americans. There was no doubt that he was able to earn the support of a coalition of Americans of all backgrounds. Meanwhile, Clinton appeared to be standing tall as a politician having a long record of international experience and reputation. Like Obama who used iconic figure – Abraham Lincoln – and citing his resonating words/phrases from the political lexicon, Clinton also

used the iconic figure – former President Franklin Delano Roosevelt – and borrowed his resonating words/phrases to keep her political goal going. Lincoln was used by Obama to evoke and underscore the spirit of unity of all Americans to work together for their common good, whereas Roosevelt was used by Clinton to carry on the four freedoms. Clinton seemed to follow her Democratic predecessor as she was enlisting the support of minorities such as LGBT voters, immigrants, and the majority of middle class voters of various backgrounds. Even she sounded more populous message as she promised to be a champion for all Americans and she was running to make the so-called “inclusive economy” work for everyday Americans whereby she promised that nobody was left out. Prosperity was for all Americans. If Obama’s bid was also concerned with foreign policies such as putting an end to unending war outside the country, Clinton’s bid was focused more on the strengthening America’s domestic middle class economy that was reclaimed by her democratic predecessor. American role in the international affairs was sufficiently left to her track of records on the international affairs, of which she mentioned her role to have represented America on the international forum in the beginning and, of course implicitly to every body’s common knowledge, in her track of record as a former Secretary of State. It was actually slightly mentioned, but not further elaborated as she also stated to further the cause of defending the country to meet new global challenges that required all elements of America’s power. 6. Conclusion Having analyzed and discussed

Obama’s and Clinton’s bids for presidency,

4

a conclusion can be drawn as follows: 1. Both Obama and Clinton sought to keep going America’s middle class economy motivated by honoring the America’s basic bargain. 2.Obama was to criticize the failed politic and policies of the preceeding Republican president, of which he with the support of a coalition of Americans of diverse backgrounds were to change them. 3. Clinton was in a position to continue the rewarding middle class economy to emphasize on what she called inclusive economy whereby no body would be left out and hard work would pay off for every American. Last but not the least, to know better the whole hallmark of Clinton’s bid for the U.S. 2016 Presidency, it would be worth studying her bid in the light

of Obama’s bid for the second term of the U.S.

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President, in which he underscored his goal

to reclaim the American middle class economy,

2

at least on the following speeches: Osawatomie Economic Speech (Obama, 2011),

State of the Union Address (Obama, 2012a), and Virginia Beach Campaign Speech (Obama, 2012b).

1

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1

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