

# From tourist and resident to inhabitant and "inhabitantness".

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## Abstract

*The aim of this contribute is to debate about cities and places from the point of view of their populations. It is a rethinking of the paradigms of government: if before it was done for the citizens, and these were identified with residents, today we are facing new forms of citizenship, more elusive and rarefied nonetheless with important territorial implications.*

*Nowadays we have to recognize residents and transient populations (tourists, first of all) like different ways of being inhabitants of a place. In this view, being inhabitant is a fuzzy variable, and the property that describes and measures how, and how much, I'm an inhabitant of a place was called "inhabitantness".*

*The city inevitably becomes the mirror of its inhabitants, whether stable or transient.*

*The project of the city absolutely must be accompanied by a draft, an idea, a path that thinks, includes and involves all its inhabitants.*

Keywords: Populations, tourists, residents, inhabitants, inhabitantness

## Introduction

The aim of the paper is to debate on what it means today to be an inhabitant of a place. After I try to build a framework to recognize residents and transient populations (tourists, first of all) like different ways of being inhabitants of a place.

Nowadays the cities changes continuously, and it is difficult to understand and describe these changes, because they are not just physical. The fastest changes concern the meanings, the uses and connotations of places and these changes are the ones that more affect on the future of a places. Cities take their meanings from the system of relationships between places and people<sup>1</sup>.

These meanings are not fixed and invariable, but are constantly being negotiated, being changed, being recoded. To govern a place requires an understanding of the diversity and richness of these different meanings in relation to each population.

The question is that the population that give meanings and sense to a city aren't just the resident ones.

It is not a new thing, a lot of cities in the past were built in strategical points for the traffic of people and goods (Troy for example), and they acquire sense just if you read them from this point of view. It is the same thing if we think about the places inside the cities: squares, roads, stations, gardens, shops activities, and so on are answers to the people that use those places, some times in a planned way, more times spontaneously.

So one way to describe a city could be try to describe its inhabitants, taking into account the flows of the transient populations.

The speed of these changes in increased in the last 40 year and it depends by our styles of life.

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<sup>1</sup> Amin A., Thrift N. (2001), *Cities. Reimagining the urban*, Blackwell Publishers,

The changed mobility paradigms allows people to take part in the life of different territories, not necessarily near each other, in ways and times absolutely variables among individuals.

Most of these different ways of life “exploded” after the Second World War, in Italy as well as in all the others developed countries.

There has been a transition from a world in which people were born, lived and died without having moved more than a few kilometres to a world in which is difficult to spend a whole day without moving.

Today the contact, the knowledge and the exchange of information among people can occur without physical presence. However, being able to reach people everywhere generates an increase of movements. From a pre-industrial world, in which there was symbiosis between place and community, we have moved to a world in which local life is increasingly involved in global processes and the concept of community is in crisis.

This individual, mobile and plural life is not easily classifiable within a conceptual system. The structure of a city and its transformations (physical and immaterial) arise from the movement that is generated around them, a movement of populations: people that work, sleep, buy, or "simply" pass through.

There are territories that have the so-called “touristic vocation” affected by the presence of a transient population important in both quantity and quality terms: a case even more complex than the previous one for understanding the phenomena and having the possibility to recognize and govern them.

Clearly there are differences among various populations, some of them will compete with each other <sup>2</sup>, others can co-exist.

Tourism policies are usually characterized by a sectorial, economic approach, they are not seen as territorial policies. But tourism means new places, houses, infrastructures, pipelines, power lines and so on. At the same time, tourism brings different people together, new residents arrive from other countries, the culture is influenced, places are viewed in different ways and new meanings are given to them. Policies that affects the population composition of a territory, its urban, physical and environmental structure should not be sectorial; we do think that the tourism policies are territorial policies.

Investigate how many population are on a place, and who they are appears necessary in order to understand the transformation of a place and device suitable policies to govern it.

It is a rethinking of the paradigms of government: if before it was clear that the government was done for the citizens, and these were identified with residents, today we are facing new forms of citizenship, more elusive and rarefied nonetheless with important territorial implications.

## **The tourists**

Among the people who move into an area, the tourists’ category is growing in importance. Tourists are traditionally recognized and defined as different from residents, often accounted just as numbers in the policies of a city, thought as customers by tourism policies. Nevertheless they play an important role in the territories affected by their presence , and a lot of times their number is huge compared with residents, clearly it means that the development of those places (in terms of plans, program, policies and so on) is often leaded by tourism choices rather than other.

But: “Who is a Tourist?”<sup>3</sup>

According to Cohen (1974):

“One of the more interesting features accompanying the contemporary tourist boom is the extraordinary proliferation of diverse forms of tourism, ranging from short excursions to round-the-world trips, from sea-side vacations to veritable expeditions into almost unknown parts of the world, such as Antarctica or Greenland, from organized and routinized mass-travel to leisurely, individualized exploration or drifting off- the- beaten- track.”

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<sup>2</sup> Ashworth G.J., Tunbridge J.E. (1990), *The Tourist-Historic City*, Belhaven, London.

<sup>3</sup> Cohen E. (1974), Who is a tourist? A conceptual clarification, in *The Sociological Review* XXII,

From 1974 to today the ways to do tourism and the types of tourists have exponentially increased their number.

This view recognizes a variety of reasons and different ways of dealing with places and populations; the concepts of tourism and tourist should be a bridge to tourisms and tourists.

The World Tourism Organization<sup>4</sup> defines tourists as: people who "travel to and stay in places outside their usual environment for more than twenty-four hours and not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited".

For Cohen (1974) – A tourist is a temporary traveller, travelling in the expectation of pleasure from the novelty and change experienced on a relatively long and non-recurrent round trip.

Moreover Cohen<sup>5</sup> defines six key dimensions for the tourist:

- The temporary nature of the trip, the tourist maintains residence and address, unlike tramps. The journey of the tourist is an exceptional and often unusual state.
- The voluntariness; the tourist chooses to leave and return freely, without constraints (eg. political refugees);
- The circularity of the shift: the tourist always returns to the place of departure. Tourism is a temporary migration.
- The time spent is more than one day, unlike walkers and excursionists. Time and distance involved must be relatively long.
- The route is not recurring, unlike commuters or those who own homes for spending the weekends.
- The non-instrumental goals, the travel should not be due to external motivation (eg, study or business), but must be an end in itself.

Tourism is a cumulative process of these six dimensions, a continuum within which there are different shades and intensities of the tourism component.

All the above dimensions already encompass, more or less explicitly, the time dimension:

- talking about usual places, implies a lack of knowledge and attendance by the tourist of destination places.
- The time spent is a minimum of 24 hours, the various definitions refer to the idea of sleeping elsewhere. This involves a contact with the local population or at least the use of a local service (hotel).
- No more than one consecutive year.

The time limit (albeit one year seems a rather arbitrary term) is very interesting because it implies the existence of a time of attendance beyond which we cannot be regarded as tourists.

In short, the tourist is a person who does not know (or who knows little about) the place where he has gone, at least sleeps a night there, does not repeat often the same trip and is not staying too long.

The various definitions show the effort required to "cut off" a lot of transient populations that are not tourists, but neither inhabitants in the traditional sense.

This effort can hide the idea that after that a tourist knows, lives and attends a place can become another, it might be an inhabitant in fieri.

Cohen (1974) illustrates that the tourism component can be represented in a fuzzy way. "There exist many traveller roles which possess a "touristic component" of varying strength prominent examples are the Italian or Irish immigrant who pays a visit to the "old country", the young professional engaging in "touristry", who is in search for jobs which will give him an opportunity to see the world while working (Pape 1965), the pilgrim who combine devotion with some "religious tourism" or the persons who "takes the waters" to a spa<sup>6</sup>, ostensibly to improve his health but actually to enjoy himself (Lowenthal 1962)."

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<sup>4</sup> WTO, (1997), "UNWTO technical manual: Collection of Tourism Expenditure Statistics" World Tourism Organization. p.

<sup>5</sup> Cohen E. (1974), *ibidem*

<sup>6</sup> Cohen E. (1974) "Who is a tourist? A conceptual clarification", in *The sociological review* XXII,

There is not therefore a dichotomy or a strong gradient between the travellers who are tourists and the ones who are not.

This point of view is supported by postmodern tourism which emphasizes the recognition of differences. “In practice, postmodernism tends to emphasize the diversity and richness of life, in which the subject is actively involved in the construction of social meanings through its activity and its reflection: the logic exclusive -or ... or. .. -, is replaced with the logic of inclusion -and ... ..- and..”<sup>7</sup>.

The key for understanding the postmodern tourism is entrusted by Uriely<sup>8</sup> to the recognition of three fundamental characteristics:

- Lack of differentiation between the everyday life and touristic experience; a vision of the holiday characterized by not doing, by the distance from daily tasks, is replaced with a vision characterized by doing and by a mixture of activities<sup>9</sup>. The touristic moment becomes a completion of everyday life. By contrast this one is enriched by "touristic moments", the space of work and vacation, the everyday and the extraordinary overlap more and more.
- Multiplication of different experiences within the same touristic moment; the pluralization of the experience starts from the need to do a series of activities (including non-tourist) that tourism space can offer;
- The role of subjectivity in the construction of the tourist experience. Some things or places can have a different meaning and value for tourists, and this value can also be acquired by residents: the visitor has an active role in the allocation of meanings.

An important flow of transient population changes the meanings and values of spaces and places. If transient populations are more numerous than resident population, this change will be much stronger and faster, but it also depends by the time that they will spend on the territory and by their degree of social involvement.

The activities that the tourist does, the time spent in a place and the involvement processes within places and their social structure, lead (or may lead) the tourist to become, gradually, closer to resemble an inhabitant.

Therefore inhabitants and tourists could not be considered as different populations, but like different shades of the same population.

## **The inhabitants**

The above leads us to wonder about who is the contemporary inhabitant of a place and especially what means to be an inhabitant of a place.

Where once there was essentially identification between the resident community and the place, now the link is very different and variable among individuals. New populations have appeared interpreting new lifestyles. I can be resident in a place but spend all my life in other places, some times not so close to the first one. Between residents exist a lot of differences in the way that they use, approach or take care of places.

To try to understand these differences, we started from a sociological approach, referring to the research line pursued by Martinotti<sup>10</sup>, Nuvolati<sup>11</sup>, Mela and Davico<sup>12</sup>, that classify the populations according to the activities that they perform on the territory.

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<sup>7</sup> Gatti F., Puggelli F.R. (2006), “Nuove frontiere del turismo” – a cura di– Hoepli, Milano

<sup>8</sup> Uriely N. (1997), “Theories of modern and postmodern tourism” in Annals of Tourism research vol 24,

<sup>9</sup> Lash A, Urry J. (1994), “Economies of signs and spaces” Sage Publication, London

<sup>10</sup> Martinotti G. (1993), *Metropoli. La nuova morfologia sociale della città*, Il Mulino, Bologna

<sup>11</sup> Nuvolati G. (2002), *“Popolazioni in movimento, città in trasformazione. Abitanti, pendolari, city users, uomini d'affari e flâneurs”*, Il Mulino, Bologna

<sup>12</sup> Mela A., Davico L. (2002), “Le società urbane.”, Carocci, Milano

This classification recognizes within the city the following populations: inhabitants (residents), commuters, city users (passing guests, students and everyone who have an instrumental relationship with the city), businessmen and flâneurs.

So we have a first distinction between four types of populations made on the basis of three functions: living, working and consuming<sup>13</sup>.

Populations	Activities performed		
	Living	working	consuming
Inhabitants	Yes	yes/no	yes
Commuters	No	yes	(yes)
City users	No	no	yes
Businessmen	No	yes	yes
Flâneurs	Yes	yes/no	yes

**Tabella** Errore. Nel documento non esiste testo dello stile specificato. **1 – Classification of populations based on activity**

Tourists are a subclass of city users. They differ because (usually) they spend longer periods in the city doing a more complete range of activities: visiting museums, consuming meals, shopping, walking, overnight staying and, in general, coming from more remote places.

As we can see, thinking only of the city of the residents means to overlook much of the population that influences the life and shape of the city itself.

In general, today's lifestyles are so personal that anyone can, at different times, belong to either population, the same individual, depending on the area or the time under consideration, may be resident, commuter, city user, etc.

A city user may be a foreign tourist, a college student, a patient that needs medical care, etc.. It is evident that their participation in the city's life, their impact on spaces and meanings, their ways of living are not the same; even within each category there are significant differences.

Connote a population on the basis of the performed activities is useful but not sufficient to determine its influence on a place.

Another variable that becomes discriminatory to differentiate the populations is the time that they "spend" in the territory: more time a person stays in a place more he/she will be enrooted leading to a stronger identification with the place.

The measure of the degree of identification / belonging of a person to a particular place could be obtained, as a first approximation, as a function of the time that it is passed inside or connected with it.

To try to investigate further what the distinctive elements of inhabiting a place are we have developed a conceptual framework of reference.

To build our framework we took into account three assumptions:

1. Whoever can know whatever place and become inhabitant of it.

“To estimate the type of relationship that links an individual to a place - in terms of perception and attribution of meaning to places (Walmsley<sup>14</sup>) we should start from a general point, namely that any place in any city can be, by any person, known or unknown.<sup>15</sup>”

<sup>13</sup> Nuvolati G. (2003); *Resident and Non-resident Populations: Quality of Life, Mobility and Time Policies*, in: Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy, 33:2, 67-83

<sup>14</sup> Walmsley D.J. (1988), *“The individual in the city”*, Longman Scientific & Technical, London

<sup>15</sup> Nuvolati G. (2002), op. cit

To become inhabitants of a place it is not strictly necessary to have past ties, inherit knowledge or otherwise.

2. The knowledge and the experience of a place are incremental.

If knowledge of a place is incremental, each person can become “more inhabitant” with increasing experience; certainly it depends on who we are, our culture, our feeling with the place, both in terms of intangible characteristics (local culture, language and heritage) and tangible ones (environment, urban spaces, services, etc)

3. There are many ways to inhabit a territory, each and all contribute to its environmental, cultural and social transformation.

“The city is made up of places, both natural and constructed, public and private. It is compared with these that individuals relate in the construction of their identity (Lee<sup>16</sup>, 1982). Feel part of, or be unrelated to a city also means recognizing the places, attend, give it meaning, memorize them. Of course, the identification with a city does not happen only in a purely physical way. The network of relationships, the sharing of cultural patterns, lifestyles play a prominent role in forging the attachment of an individual to a community and within the territorial context of reference.”<sup>17</sup>

On these basis four dimensions seem to be relevant for defining the inhabitant of a place:

- I. The time he/she passes over the territory;
- II. the type of performed activities;
- III. the social involvement;
- IV. the attitudes of places.

Each one defines the quality of the inhabitant, and only good scores in all dimensions identify the traditional inhabitant; different scores correspond to different inhabitants.

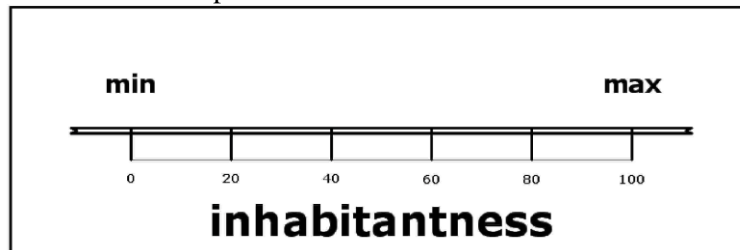
These assumptions lead us to say that we can define, in some way, “how much” people are inhabitants of a place.

## The inhabitantness

We can assert that being inhabitants of a place is a fuzzy variable. "In the modern theory of sets, a fuzzy variable" is defined as the type of imprecision that is associated with fuzzy sets such that within classes there is not a sharp transition between members and non"<sup>18</sup>.

Apart from being residents or not, tourists or commuters, each one can be defined inhabitant; there is not only one way to inhabit but there are many different ways.

For each of the dimensions defining the inhabitant (as listed above), we can identify a set of indicators useful to define a measure. We can report each value on a scale from 0 to 100, and build an overall score, in the same scale, that summarizes the previous one.



<sup>16</sup> Lee B. (1982), *Psychosocial Theories of the Self*, Plenum Press, New York

<sup>17</sup> Nuvolati G. (2002), op. cit

<sup>18</sup> Bellman R.E., Zadeh L.A. (1970), *Decision-Making in a Fuzzy Environment* - MANAGEMENT SCIENCE, Vol. 17, No. 4, December 1970, pp. B-141-B-164

**Figure 1 – inhabitantness scale**

The maximum value, 100% represents the individuals who have been living in the city for a long time, work, consume and spend in it their free time and, also, “take care of” it and are an integral part of local society: in short, the traditional inhabitants. The minimum value, zero, represents the individuals who are not inhabitants. In between are all the others.

The “measure” of being inhabitants of a place can be defined like "Inhabitantness”.

We can consider this characteristic as an indicator of the goodness of a person for the territory: the greater the inhabitantness, the better a person is for the territory. Therefore actions that improve the presence of populations with high inhabitantness or policies that increase this title are certainly interventions that improve the local system, with spin-offs on its anthropogenic (social and cultural) and environmental components.

Looking at contemporary life is clear that no one is inhabitant of a place at 100%. Lifestyles are so many that it is almost unthinkable now performing all the activities listed above in one place: today everyone is inhabitant of several places in different ways. We can think of constructing a map of the inhabitantness for the populations of a place. As result we will have a temporary picture of the number and quality of today's inhabitants. Clearly, they can vary in number but also their inhabitantness can vary in both positive and negative sense, because they can become "more or less inhabitants" than before.

A territory which has a higher average of inhabitantness is certainly richer than another one, with the same number of inhabitants, whose average is less.

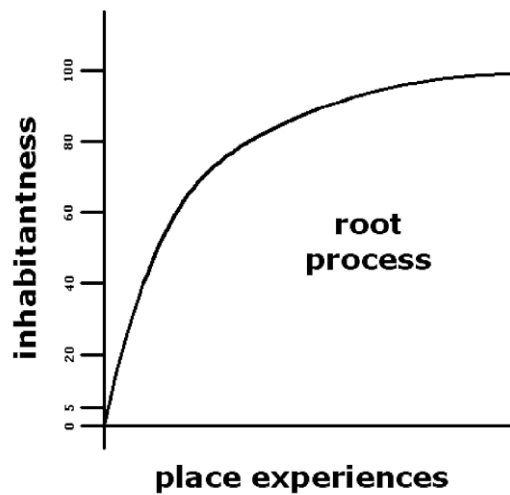
A good policy is the one that among the transient populations (including tourist) will benefit those with highly inhabitantness, since they are more important for a territory.

### **The inhabitantness over the time. Evolution and dynamics**

The same score does not represent the same population, inhabitantness must be assessed over time, in its evolution.

Two inhabitants both at 50% score for example, can be very different from each other: one might be a person born and grew up in a place and after emigrated, and the other a person born elsewhere but now frequenting that place assiduously and working there. It is clear that to speak about inhabitantness at 50% it is not sufficient to identify the populations, we need to have further indications.

Beyond providing a static frame of inhabitantness, it is also important to have a dynamic one. Between a resident who is in a rooting phase (inhabitantness is rising) and one that is in uprooting (decreases of inhabitantness) there are substantial differences.



**Figure 2 – The root process**

We can represent the root process (growth of inhabitantness) in a graph ( placing experience on abscissa and inhabitantness score on ordinate), the curve has a logarithmic trend: to equal experiences correspond increases of inhabitantness each time smaller as the title grows up.

The time required to increase the inhabitantness (at any level) depends on both the peculiarity of the person and the characteristics of the place (in the broad sense, both environmental and socio-cultural); so each person has a different speed-distance of the curve.

The curve is different if we evaluate the eradication path (loss of inhabitantness).

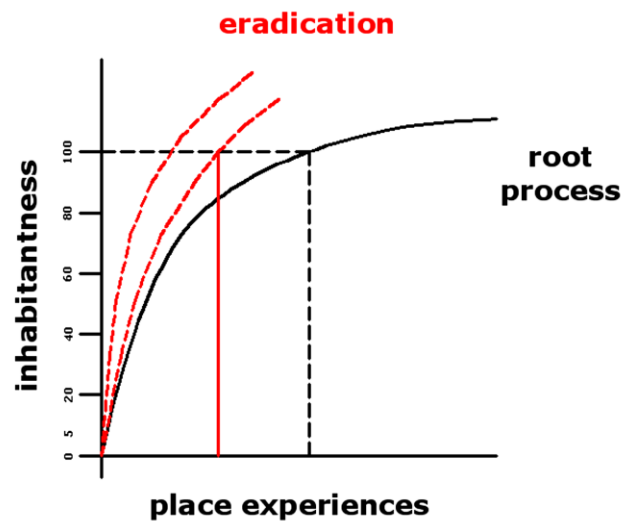


Figure 3 .- Eradication path

For example we can evaluate what happens when someone moves away from where was born and grew up. Despite not spending much time in the place of origin any longer, it cannot be said that the person has ceased to be an inhabitant of the place of origin. The experience and the knowledge of places remain over the years, friendships and relationships continue to involve us, our interest in the events affecting those places is still very high, even though we are at considerable physical distance from them.

Being or feeling inhabitants of a place is a fact that does not need continuity, assiduity or repetitiveness.

However, there is a certain "decay" during a lifetime. If for decades you do not visit a place and stop attending the social life, something changes. The place has since changed while in our memory it is remained unchanged: the reality and the memory/imaginary become very different.

Nevertheless, to maintain the inhabitantness level already achieved, one does not need to carry on doing all the experiences: there is not direct proportionality between the experiences that are not continued and the loss of inhabitantness. The eradication path will be different:

The speed of distance of the eradication path is therefore considerably lower than that of the phase of rooting. Moreover, since we are talking about people and the timescale available to them is limited to that of a lifetime, the curve cannot be retraced integrally. If we consider a rooted inhabitant (100%), he/she can never decay, in the time-frame of a life, below a "certain inhabitantness" level, because some of the experiences of a place remain everlastingly.

As a result we can say that everyone is an inhabitant of all the places where has been in his/her life. However, only a few (or at least one) are the main references, the ones where we think we are inhabitants, those which, although we may have left them, remain fundamental and important for our life, and at the same time we remains important for those places.

To have people with high inhabitantness is important for a place, because these inhabitants of today will still be good inhabitants tomorrow. This character is the reason why the policies of a government of a territory should have as key target the improvement of its inhabitantness level.

Invest in policies that increase inhabitantness means to have returns for many years.



Once we have achieved a good level of inhabitantness, if our experience leads us elsewhere, we remain inhabitants of the place anyhow, to paraphrase DeBeers we can say that "a good inhabitant is forever."

## Conclusions

The biggest novelty discussed here is the attempt to give a new definition and a measure of being inhabitants of a place, overcoming the traditional distinctions between residents and transient populations. Describe a city or a territory through its inhabitants could be helpful for understanding the dynamics at work and for a more aware plan for the future.

It doesn't mean forget our traditional analysis but add a new point of view.

We called the quality that measure how and how much a person is inhabitant of a place inhabitantness.

The inhabitantness does not think about population or groups based on "a priori" characteristics, but investigates the populations on the basis of their relationship with the place.

The result could be a better understanding of what are the best populations and what are the worst, what features we can improve, and which ones discourage.

We are aware of the enormous difficulties that exist in the retrieval of data to construct general frameworks of inhabitantness, if we still find difficult to perform quantitative assessments, it is even more complex for qualitative ones.

However it is believed that the conceptual framework can be very helpful for designing policies related to tourism issues as well as other territorial policies. The model has also a forecast character, as it is possible to envisage future scenarios of populations on the basis of changes in local policies.

Take into account these population obviously doesn't mean that we have to satisfy each need that they have. In a lot of cases they compete and we have to choose which population is the one that is better for that place at that moment.

Take into account inhabitantness, in all its dimensions and its evolution during the time, means that I know what is happening to the populations of a place and I can decide in a more aware way those who benefit of my policies, programs and plans, in brief what kind of inhabitants we need.

The city inevitably becomes the mirror of its inhabitants, whether stable or transient. The inhabitants make the city, and they evolve together to the city, influencing one each other.

The project of the city absolutely must be accompanied by a project, an idea, a path that think to the inhabitants, in the large sense that we describe.

Planning the future of a place, means, inevitably, planning its inhabitants.

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