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Online Appendix

A.1 Constructing the sample

We evaluate our 'failure hypothesis' by comparing public responsibility attributions (PRA) in four cases of EU policy disappointments in EU foreign policy as well as EU environmental policy. In EU foreign policy, we study (1) the EU's failure to act in the Libyan crisis and (2) the EU's failed sanctions policy towards Russia. In EU environmental policy aimed at implementing the Kyoto Protocol, we compare PRA for (3) the EU's failure to perform in the EU Emission Trading Scheme (ETS), and (4) the EU's member states failure to comply with European regulations regarding the Paris Agreement.

As is common in the literature to examine PRA, we engage in content analysis of the cases' coverage in the quality press (see, e.g., Gerhards, Offerhaus and Roose 2009; Greuter 2014; Roose, Scholl and Sommer 2016; Rittberger, Schwarzenbeck and Zangl 2017; Schwarzenbeck 2017). We analyzed the coverage of two quality newspapers – one liberal-democratic and one conservative – in Austria (*Der Standard, Die Presse*), France (*Le Figaro, Le Monde*), Germany (*Süddeutsche Zeitung, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), and the UK (*The Guardian, The Times*). Assessing quality newspapers in the study of the public sphere is a common research strategy (Dolezal, Grande and Hutter 2016. 45; Gerhards, Offerhaus and Roose 2007; Koopmans and Statham 2010; Rittberger, Schwarzenbeck and Zangl 2017).

To single out articles covering the four cases of EU policy disappointments, we conducted keyword searches in digital newspaper archives. To identify in the selected newspapers PRA for the four EU policy disappointments, we conducted a keyword search in the digital newspaper archive *Factiva*, using the same case-specific search string across all newspapers. Only for the coverage of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* we had to draw on the newspaper's own online archive. In the EU foreign policy case-pair, we started our analysis at the point in time where the respective failures have been publicly discussed for the first time, i.e., February 15, 2011, in the case of the Libya case and March 17, 2014, in the Russia case. We then analysed the coverage of the two EU foreign policy failures for the period of one year. In the EU environmental policy case-pair, the begin of our analysis coincides in the Kyoto case with the start of the second program phase of the EU ETS on January 1st, 2008 following a pilot phase primarily aimed at setting up the system (European Commission 2015), and in the Paris case with the EU's ratification of the agreement on October 5, 2016. We analysed the coverage of the two EU environmental policy failures until June 1st, 2020.

The 1.614 articles identified by our keyword search were then reviewed manually to sort out articles that did not address the respective policy as well as articles that did not hint at any

contestation of the policy. The same procedure applied to duplicates. The final sample included 397 relevant articles from which we identified public responsibility attributions through qualitative content analysis (see Table A.1).

Table A.1: Selection of material.

Newspaper	Source	Case	Keywords	Period	Hits	Relevant
The Guardian	Factiva	Libya	Libya AND (European Union OR EU) AND (Mistake OR Problem OR Critique OR Failure)	15.02.2011-15.02.2012	53	3
		Russia	Russia AND Sanctions AND (European Union OR EU) AND (Mistake OR Problem OR Critique OR Failure)	17.03.2014-17.03.2015	53	14
		Kyoto	(EU OR European Union) AND (emission OR Kyoto Protocol OR emission trade) AND (fail OR oversupply)	01.01.2008-01.06.2020	54	11
		Paris	(EU OR European Union) AND (Paris Agreement OR climate deal OR climate goals) AND (fail OR failure)	05.10.2016-01.06.2020	57	17
The Times	Factiva	Libya	Libya AND (European Union OR EU) AND (Mistake OR Problem OR Critique OR Failure)	15.02.2011-15.02.2012	30	4
		Russia	Russia AND Sanctions AND (European Union OR EU) AND (Mistake OR Problem OR Critique OR Failure)	17.03.2014-17.03.2015	36	9
		Kyoto	Russia AND Sanctions AND (European Union OR EU) AND (Mistake OR Problem OR Critique OR Failure)	01.01.2008-01.06.2020	65	11
		Paris	(EU OR European Union) AND (Paris Agreement OR climate deal OR climate goals) AND (fail OR failure)	05.10.2016-01.06.2020	25	4
Le Monde	Factiva	Libya	Libye ET (Union européenne OU UE) ET (erreur OU problème OU critique OU échec)	15.02.2011-15.02.2012	75	20
		Russia	Russie ET sanctions ET (Union européen OU UE) ET (erreur OU problème OU critique OU échec)	17.03.2014-17.03.2015	45	18
		Kyoto	(UE or Union Européenne) and (droits à polluer or permis de polluer or protocole de Kyoto or commerce des émissions or marché des émissions or quotas d'émission or marché du carbone or bourse du carbone or ETS) and (échec or offre excédentaire or surplus or échou* or faute or problème)	01.01.2008-01.06.2020	58	17
		Paris	(UE or Union Européenne) and (conférence de Paris or COP or accord de Paris or accord* sur le climat or régime climatique or objectifs climatiques or objectifs en matière de climat or objectifs en matière climatique) and (échec or échou* or faute or problème or faillite or naufrage)	05.10.2016-01.06.2020	71	22
Le Figaro	Factiva	Libya	Libye ET (Union européenne OU UE) ET (erreur OU problème OU critique OU échec)	15.02.2011-15.02.2012	43	12
		Russia	Russie AND sanctions AND (Union européen OR UE) AND (erreur OR problème OR critique OR échec)	17.03.2014-17.03.2015	36	10

		Kyoto	(UE or Union Européenne) and (droits à polluer or permis de polluer or protocole de Kyoto or commerce des émissions or marché des émissions or quotas d'émission or marché du carbone or bourse du carbone or ETS) and (échec or offre excédentaire or surplus or échou* or faute or problème)	01.01.2008-01.06.2020	24	11
		Paris	(UE or Union Européenne) and (conférence de Paris or COP or accord de Paris or accord* sur le climat or régime climatique or objectifs climatiques or objectifs en matière de climat or objectifs en matière climatique) and (échec or échou* or faute or problème or faillite or naufrage)	05.10.2016-01.06.2020	20	2
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Factiva	Libya	Libyen AND (Europäische Union OR EU) AND (Fehler OR Problem OR Kritik OR Scheitern)	15.02.2011-15.02.2012	71	9
		Russia	Russland AND Sanktionen AND (Europäische Union OR EU) AND (Fehler OR Problem OR Kritik OR Scheitern)	17.03.2014-17.03.2015	100	26
		Kyoto	(EU OR Europäische Union) AND (Emissionen OR Kyoto Protokoll OR Emissionshandel) AND (Fehler OR Überangebot)	01.01.2008-01.06.2020	64	13
		Paris	(EU OR Europäische Union) AND (Paris Abkommen OR Klimaabkommen OR Klimaziele) AND (Fehler OR Scheitern)	05.10.2016-01.06.2020	18	4
Frankfurter Allgemeine	FAZ Archive	Libya	Libyen AND (Europäische Union OR EU) AND (Fehler OR Problem OR Kritik OR Scheitern)	15.02.2011-15.02.2012	79	21
		Russia	Russland AND Sanktionen AND (Europäische Union OR EU) AND (Fehler OR Problem OR Kritik OR Scheitern)	17.03.2014-17.03.2015	101	30
		Kyoto	EU OR Europäische Union) AND (Emissionen OR Kyoto Protokoll OR Emissionshandel) AND (Fehler OR Überangebot)	01.01.2008-01.06.2020	84	17
		Paris	(EU OR Europäische Union) AND (Paris Abkommen OR Klimaabkommen OR Klimaziele) AND (Fehler OR Scheitern)	05.10.2016-01.06.2020	104	15
Die Presse	Factiva	Libya	Libyen AND (Europäische Union OR EU) AND (Fehler OR Problem OR Kritik OR Scheitern)	15.02.2011-15.02.2012	42	6
		Russia	Russland AND Sanktionen AND (Europäische Union OR EU) AND (Fehler OR Problem OR Kritik OR Scheitern)	17.03.2014-17.03.2015	110	31
		Kyoto	EU OR Europäische Union) AND (Emissionen OR Kyoto Protokoll OR Emissionshandel) AND (Fehler OR Überangebot)	01.01.2008-01.06.2020	16	8
		Paris	(EU OR Europäische Union) AND (Paris Abkommen OR Klimaabkommen OR Klimaziele) AND (Fehler OR Scheitern)	05.10.2016-01.06.2020	14	3
Der Standard	Factiva	Libya	Libyen AND (Europäische Union OR EU) AND (Fehler OR Problem OR Kritik OR Scheitern)	15.02.2011-15.02.2012	32	3
		Russia	Russland AND Sanktionen AND (Europäische Union OR EU) AND (Fehler OR Problem OR Kritik OR Scheitern)	17.03.2014-17.03.2015	58	19
		Kyoto	EU OR Europäische Union) AND (Emissionen OR Kyoto Protokoll OR Emissionshandel) AND (Fehler OR Überangebot)	01.01.2008-01.06.2020	19	5
		Paris	(EU OR Europäische Union) AND (Paris Abkommen OR Klimaabkommen OR Klimaziele) AND (Fehler OR Scheitern)	05.10.2016-01.06.2020	11	2

A.2 The coding process

In our sample of 397 relevant articles (78 covering EU failures in the Libya case, 157 addressing EU failures in the Russia case, 85 covering the performance failure regarding the Kyoto Protocol, and 69 covering the EU failures regarding the Paris Agreement), we searched for statements in which an identifiable social or political actor has been named as (politically) responsible for the contested policy. We also coded each of these responsibility statements with regard to the target of PRA, for instance, whether EU institutions (such as the Commission, the European Parliament, or the Council) or EU Member States' domestic institutions (such as the German government) have been named as being responsible.

Responsibility attributions were only coded if all criteria constitutive of a responsibility statement were present: (1) an individual or corporate actor attributing political responsibility, which could also be the author of the article (PRA sender); (2) the failure for which political responsibility is attributed (PRA object); and (3) the political actor to whom political responsibility is attributed (PRA target).[1] The following statement from the Libya case provides an example: "Europe has flunked its first foreign policy test; It was an ad hoc alliance, not a supranational federation, that came to Benghazi's rescue." (Walden 2011) In our sample, we identified 574 responsibility attributions for which the sender, target, and the object were coded (see Table A.2).

For the purpose of this paper, we coded for each statement whether responsibility was attributed to the EU and the collective of its member states (MS) or one (or several) individual MS:

- *PRA to the EU in general:* We coded PRA statements targeting the EU when they refer to the EU (or 'Brussels' and 'Europe'), its supranational bodies and/or intergovernmental bodies (or 'the member states'), as well as their representatives (such as the respective President of the Commission or the Council).
- *PRA to individual MS:* We coded PRA statements targeting individual MS when they refer to a specific member state, including its governing institutions and individual representatives (such as head of government or minister).

[1] Whenever the sender or target of a responsibility attribution changed, a new statement was coded.

Table A.2: Documentation of results.

Source	Case	n	PRA to MS	PRA to EU
Austrian newspapers Die Presse, Der Standard	Libya	18	14	4
	Russia	35	8	27
	Kyoto	18	3	15
	Paris	6	4	2
French newspapers Le Monde, Le Figaro	Libya	31	17	14
	Russia	81	27	54
	Kyoto	59	9	50
	Paris	61	36	25
German newspapers Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung	Libya	38	21	17
	Russia	45	11	34
	Kyoto	48	1	47
	Paris	30	11	19
British newspapers The Guardian, The Times	Libya	13	5	8
	Russia	36	16	20
	Kyoto	22	8	14
	Paris	33	18	15
Sum of all newspapers	Libya	100	57	43
	Russia	197	62	135
	Kyoto	147	21	126
	Paris	130	69	61

To avoid time-dependent biases, articles were coded in randomized order. The bulk of the coding – Austrian, German, and British newspaper articles – for each case was conducted by the same coder: Coder 1 for the EU foreign policy cases and Coder 3 for the EU environmental cases. Only the French newspaper articles for all four cases – due to language skills – were coded by Coder 2 and Coder 4 respectively (see Table A.3). We can thus exclude that differences between the coders biased the overall comparison across statements or cases.

Table A.3: Assignment of coders to cases and newspapers.

Source	Case	Coder
Austrian newspapers Die Presse, Der Standard	Libya	Coder 1
	Russia	Coder 1
	Kyoto	Coder 3
	Paris	Coder 3
French newspapers Le Monde, Le Figaro	Libya	Coder 2
	Russia	Coder 2
	Kyoto	Coder 4
	Paris	Coder 4
German newspapers Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Süddeutsche Zeitung	Libya	Coder 1
	Russia	Coder 1
	Kyoto	Coder 3
	Paris	Coder 3
British newspapers The Guardian, The Times	Libya	Coder 1
	Russia	Coder 1
	Kyoto	Coder 3
	Paris	Coder 3

Still, to ensure that the coding can be reliably reproduced, we also assessed inter-coder reliability (Mayring 2010. 120). For this purpose, we randomly selected five articles from each case-pair originally coded by Coder 1 and Coder 3 respectively. We then asked Coder 2 and Coder 4 to identify PRA statements in these articles. We then compared the test codes (by Coder 2 for the EU foreign policy cases and by Coder 4 for the EU environmental policy case-pair) with the original codes (by Coder 1 for the EU foreign policy cases and by Coder 3 for the EU environmental policy case-pair) and calculated the co-occurrence of their respective codes. For the foreign policy case-pair, Coder 2 agreed with 5 out of the 7 original codes by Coder 1. But Coder 2 coded 5 further PRAs not identified by Coder 1 ('false positive error') while missing 2 PRAs identified by Coder 1 ('false negative error'). For the environmental case-pair, Coder 4 agreed with 8 out of the 10 original codes by Coder 3. But Coder 4 coded 4 additional PRAs not identified by Coder 3 ('false positive error') and missed 2 PRAs identified by Coder 3 ('false negative error'). The resulting overall agreement of 42% and 57% points to a common problem in qualitative coding: the identification of relevant statements (i.e., PRAs). Notably, as no coding units were pre-defined, we cannot quantify the (very high) number of statements that the original coders and the test coders agreed *not* to code as PRA ('true negatives'). Moreover, when coders identified the same statement, their assessment of the target of PRAs was largely congruent: In the foreign policy case-pair, Coder 2 agreed with the original coding by Coder 1 in 5 out of 5 PRAs (100%) and, in the environmental case-pair, Coder 4 agreed with

the original coding by Coder 3 in 6 out of 8 PRAs (75%). Most importantly, while coders disagreed with regards to whether some statements qualify as PRA or not, the overall results do not differ substantially between the Austrian, German, and British newspapers coded by Coder 1 and French newspapers coded by Coder 2 (see Table A.2).

Table A.4: Intercoder test.

	PRA identified by original coder	PRA identified by test coder	Agreement on PRA statements	Agreement on PRA targets
EU foreign policy case-pair	7	10	42%	100%
EU environmental policy case-pair	10	12	57%	75%

A.3 Chi-square test of independence

The observed patterns of public responsibility attributions lend support to our 'failure hypothesis' claiming a co-relation between failure type and blame target. To exclude that the observed relationship in our sample is random, we conducted a statistical analysis of contingency tables. Specifically, we test the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the independent variable (type of failure) and the dependent variable (PRA target). For the EU foreign policy case-pair and the EU environmental case-pair, Table A.5 and Table A.6 respectively show our observations with the combinations of the independent and dependent variables, contrasted by the expected absolute values for a random distribution (in brackets).[2]

Table A.5: Observed values vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the EU foreign policy case-pair.

	Libya case	Russia case	Row totals
EU & MS collective	43 (60)	135 (118)	178
MS specific	57 (40)	62 (79)	119
Column totals	100	197	297

[2] The expected value for each cell is calculated by multiplying the row total by the column total, then dividing by the grand total.

Table A.6: Observed values vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the EU environmental policy case-pair.

	Kyoto case	Paris case	Row totals
EU & MS collective	126 (99)	61 (88)	187
MS specific	21 (28)	69 (42)	90
Column totals	147	130	277

If the null hypothesis is true, we would expect the overall ratio of PRA to the EU and collective MS and individual MS (i.e., the rightmost column) to correspond to the ratio in the other two columns in Table A.5. Yet, the observed and expected values deviate quite considerably from each other. To evaluate this statistically, we conducted a *chi-square test*. In both case-pairs, the obtained chi-square value of 18.00 and 47.33 respectively implies that the null hypothesis can be rejected at the 0.01 level of significance (99% confidence level). We are thus confident that the observed pattern in our sample, which led us to confirm the plausibility of our 'failure hypothesis', is not random.

A.4 Robustness of results on the country-level

We also checked if our failure hypothesis holds within the sub-samples of Austrian, French, German, and British newspapers in each case-pair. We thus disaggregated our sample on the country level and tested the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the dependent and the independent variables.

In the EU foreign policy case-pair, the deviation between the observed and expected values remains statistically significant for three of the four sub-samples. For the Austrian sub-sample, we obtain a chi-square value of 14.77 (see Table A.7), 8.26 for the German sub-sample (see Table A.8), and 4.35 for the French sub-sample (see Table A.9). Thus, for these three sub-samples, the null hypothesis can be rejected on the 95% confidence level; and for the Austrian sub-sample even on the 99% confidence level. Only for the British sub-sample (see Table A.10), we obtain a chi-square value of 0.14, which indicates that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected at a meaningful level of significance. However, it is important to bear in mind that this subgroup has the lowest statement numbers. Overall, the country-level robustness check further increases our confidence in our results for the EU foreign policy case-pair.

Table A.7: Observed vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the EU foreign policy case-pair – Austrian sub-sample.

	Libya case	Russia case	Row totals
EU & MS collective	4 (11)	27 (20)	31
MS specific	14 (7)	8 (15)	22
Column totals	18	35	53

Table A.8: Observed vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the EU foreign policy case-pair – German sub-sample.

	Libya case	Russia case	Row totals
EU & MS collective	17 (23)	34 (28)	51
MS specific	21 (15)	11 (17)	32
Column totals	38	45	83

Table A.9. Observed vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the EU foreign policy case-pair – French sub-sample.

	Libya case	Russia case	Row totals
EU & MS collective	14 (19)	49 (49)	68
MS specific	17 (12)	27 (32)	44
Column totals	31	81	112

Table A.10. Observed vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the UK in the EU foreign policy case-pair – UK sub-sample.

	Libya case	Russia case	Row totals
EU & MS collective	7 (6)	16 (17)	23
MS specific	6 (7)	20 (19)	26
Column totals	13	36	49

Turning to the EU environment case-pair, the deviation between the observed and expected values again remains statistically significant for three of the four sub-samples. For the Austrian sub-sample, we obtain a chi-square value of 5.45 (see Table A.11), 16.96 for the German sub-sample (see Table A.12), and 24.51 for the French sub-sample (see Table A.13). The null hypothesis can thus again be rejected for these sub-samples on the 95% confidence level; and even on the 99% confidence level for the German and French sub-samples. The only exception is again the British sub-sample (see Table A.14), where we obtain a chi-square value of 1.75, which indicates that the null hypothesis cannot be rejected at a meaningful level of significance. Overall, the country-level robustness check further increases our confidence in our results for the EU environmental case-pair.

Table A.11: Observed vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the EU environmental policy case-pair – Austrian sub-sample.

	Kyoto case	**Paris case**	**Row totals**
EU & MS collective	15 (13)	2 (4)	17
MS specific	3 (5)	4 (2)	7
Column totals	18	6	24

Table A.12: Observed vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the EU environmental policy case-pair – German sub-sample.

	Kyoto case	**Paris case**	**Row totals**
EU & MS collective	47 (41)	19 (25)	66
MS specific	1 (7)	11 (5)	12
Column totals	48	30	78

Table A.13. Observed vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the EU environmental policy case-pair – French sub-sample.

	Kyoto case	**Paris case**	**Row totals**
EU & MS collective	50 (37)	25 (38)	75
MS specific	9 (22)	36 (23)	45
Column totals	59	61	120

Table A.14. Observed vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the UK in the EU environmental policy case-pair – UK sub-sample.

	Kyoto case	**Paris case**	**Row totals**
EU & MS collective	14 (12)	15 (17)	29
MS specific	8 (10)	18 (16)	26
Column totals	22	33	55

A.5 Robustness of results on the statement-level

We also differentiated on the statement-level between the three types of failure for which responsibility was attributed:

- **Failure to act:** The category 'failure to act' was assigned if a PRA statement criticized the lack of activity of the EU in the face of a perceived challenge that would have required joint action.
- **Failure to perform:** The category 'failure to perform' was assigned if a PRA statement criticized an EU policy because it did not deliver the desired results.
- **Failure to comply:** The category 'failure to comply' was assigned if a PRA statement criticized the lack of compliance with an EU policy.

Table A.15 provides examples of the three types of failures. In the EU foreign policy cases, we found 142 statements assigning responsibility for a failure to act, while 155 statements referred to failures to perform. In the EU environmental cases, we found 127 statements assigning responsibility for a failure to comply and 150 statements referred to failures to perform.

Table A.15: Examples of the two failure types.

Failure to act	Failure to perform	Failure to comply
• "Apart from the current efforts to levy EU sanctions against the regime in Syria, one cannot recognize a common European answer to the upheavals in the Arab world against their autocratic leaders. Europe does not speak with one voice, and it doesn't act – even though again, everything happens in front of its doorstep." (Bacia 2011; authors' translation) • "But the failure of EU and Nato to back a French and British plan for a no-fly zone has disillusioned some among the anti-Gaddafi forces" (McGreal and Tisdall 2011)	• "The sanctions of the EU did not bring about the expected results. The situation has not improved, there is no de-escalation in sight […]" (Ultsch 2014; authors' translation) • "For now, the Europeans will not impress Putin, neither with words nor with sanctions" (Brössler 2014; authors' translation)	• "In 2050 the latest, the EU plans to put an end to emitting CO2 emissions. While Brussels was busy celebrating the new climate law yesterday, Austria's environmental minister Leonore Gewessler is troubled: since a couple of days the Green party has access to a study that documents that makes the failure of the national environmental policy quasi-official. Until 2030, Austria has to reduce its emissions by 36% under EU regulation in comparison to 2005. As of yet, all national energy and climate commitments only account for a reduction of 27%" (Auer 2020; authors' translation). • "2018 is the year when countries have been asked by the UN to ratchet up their commitments on climate change. Instead our government is actually proposing to count emissions savings made from as far back as 2010 towards fulfilling their obligations in the next decade from 2021-2030. This sneaky, behind-the-scenes amendment indicates a government that likes to pretend it is a global leader but will not take the strong policy action needed to deliver the necessary change" (Neslen 2018).

Our 'failure hypothesis' would lead us to expect that PRA referring to failures to perform are more likely to target the EU or member states as a collective, whereas PRA that address failures to act or failures to comply are more likely to be directed at individual MS. To assess this correlation on the level of statements, we again conducted a statistical analysis of contingency tables. We again test the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the type of failure and the PRA target in a given statement. For the EU foreign policy case-pair and the EU environmental case-pair, Table A.16 and Table A.17 respectively show our observations with the combinations of failure types and PRA targets, contrasted by the expected absolute values for a random distribution (in brackets). For the Austrian sub-sample, we obtain a chi-square value of 38.29 for the EU foreign policy case-pair (see Table A.16) and 115,48 for the EU environmental case-pair (see Table A.17). Thus, also on the level of individual statements, the null hypothesis can be rejected on the 99% confidence level for both case-pairs.

Table A.16: Observed values vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the EU foreign policy case-pair on statement-level.

	Failure to perform	**Failure to act**	**Row totals**
EU & MS collective	119 (93)	59 (85)	178
MS specific	36 (62)	83 (57)	119
Column totals	155	142	297

Table A.17: Observed values vs. expected values for a random distribution (in brackets) in the EU environmental poly case-pair on statement-level.

	Failure to perform	**Failure to comply**	**Row totals**
EU & MS collective	143 (101)	44 (86)	187
MS specific	7 (49)	83 (41)	90
Column totals	150	127	277

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