

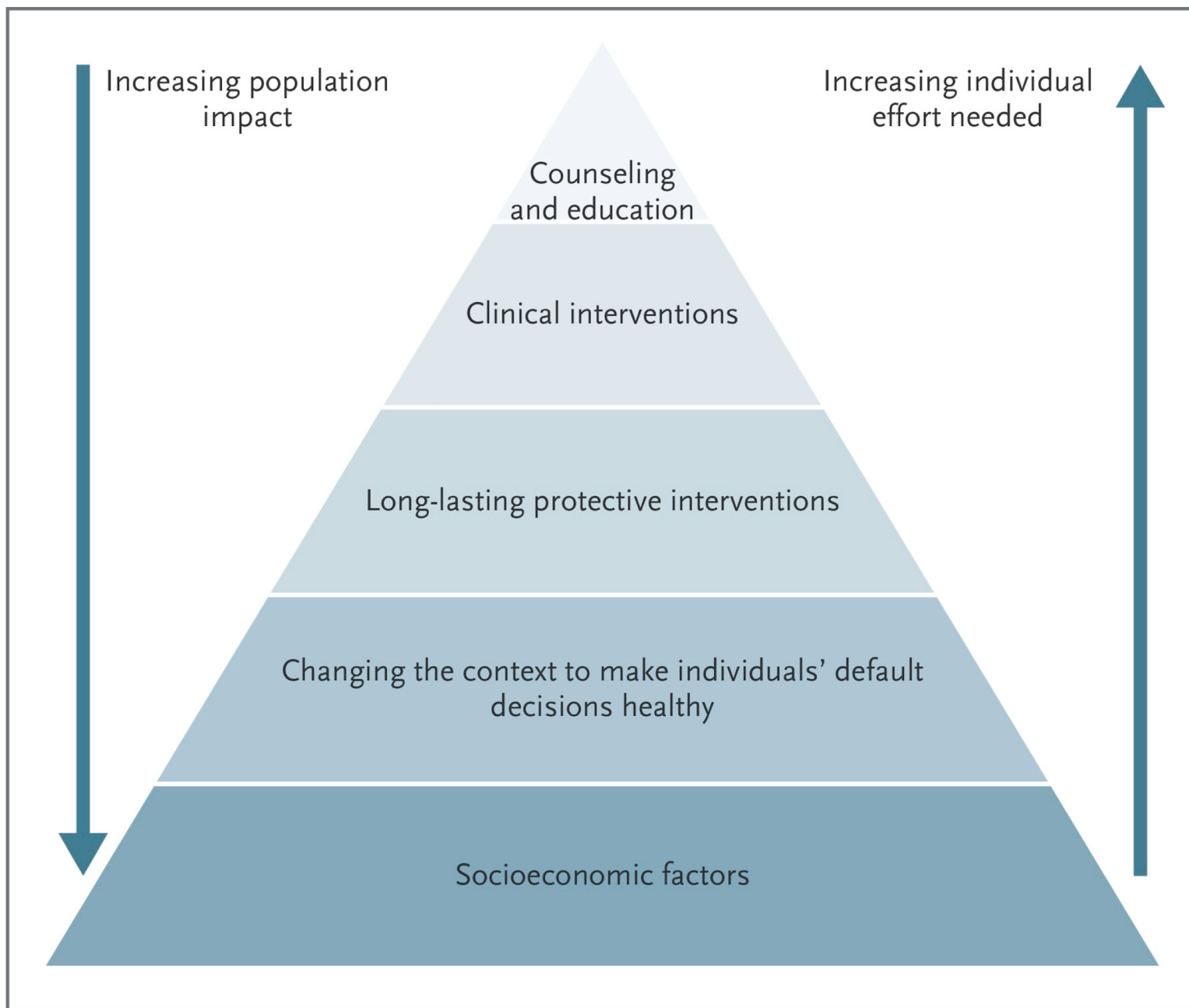
Social Conditions and Crime During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the US

Julia Schleimer, MPH (she/her)

17th Annual John Jay/Harry Frank Guggenheim
Symposium on Crime in America

“If it's not a public health problem, why are all those people dying from it?”

-Dr. David Satcher



Neighborhood Racial and Economic Segregation and Disparities in Violence During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Julia P. Schleimer, MPH, Shani A. Buggs, PhD, MPH, Christopher D. McCort, MS, Veronica A. Pear, PhD, MPH, Alaina De Biasi, PhD, Elizabeth Tomsich, PhD, Aaron B. Shev, PhD, Hannah S. Laqueur, PhD, MA, MPA, and Garen J. Wintemute, MD, MPH

Why quantify racial and economic disparities?

- Bear witness to the lived experience of communities most heavily impacted by violence
- Provide context for understanding what drives crime and whether current interventions are working
- Guide equitable prevention and response measures

Research questions

1. How big were place-based disparities in violence during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. How did pandemic-era disparities compare to pre-existing disparities prior to the pandemic?

Least privileged ZIP Codes:

greater concentration of Black*
households with incomes of
\$24,999 or less

Vs.

Most privileged ZIP Codes:

greater concentration of white*
households with incomes of
\$100,000 or greater

*Race is a social construct reflecting exposure to racism

During the first 5 months of the pandemic

Compared with the most privileged, the least privileged ZIP codes experienced an average of

- 14 more incidents of firearm violence,
- 146 more aggravated assaults,
- 5 more homicides,
- 49 more robberies, and
- 6 more rapes

After accounting for pre-existing disparities

Compared with the most privileged, the least privileged ZIP codes experienced an average of

- 2.3 more incidents of firearm violence,
- 23 more aggravated assaults,
- 1 more homicide,
- 7.4 fewer robberies, and
- 2.2 fewer rapes

Unemployment and Crime in US Cities During the Coronavirus Pandemic

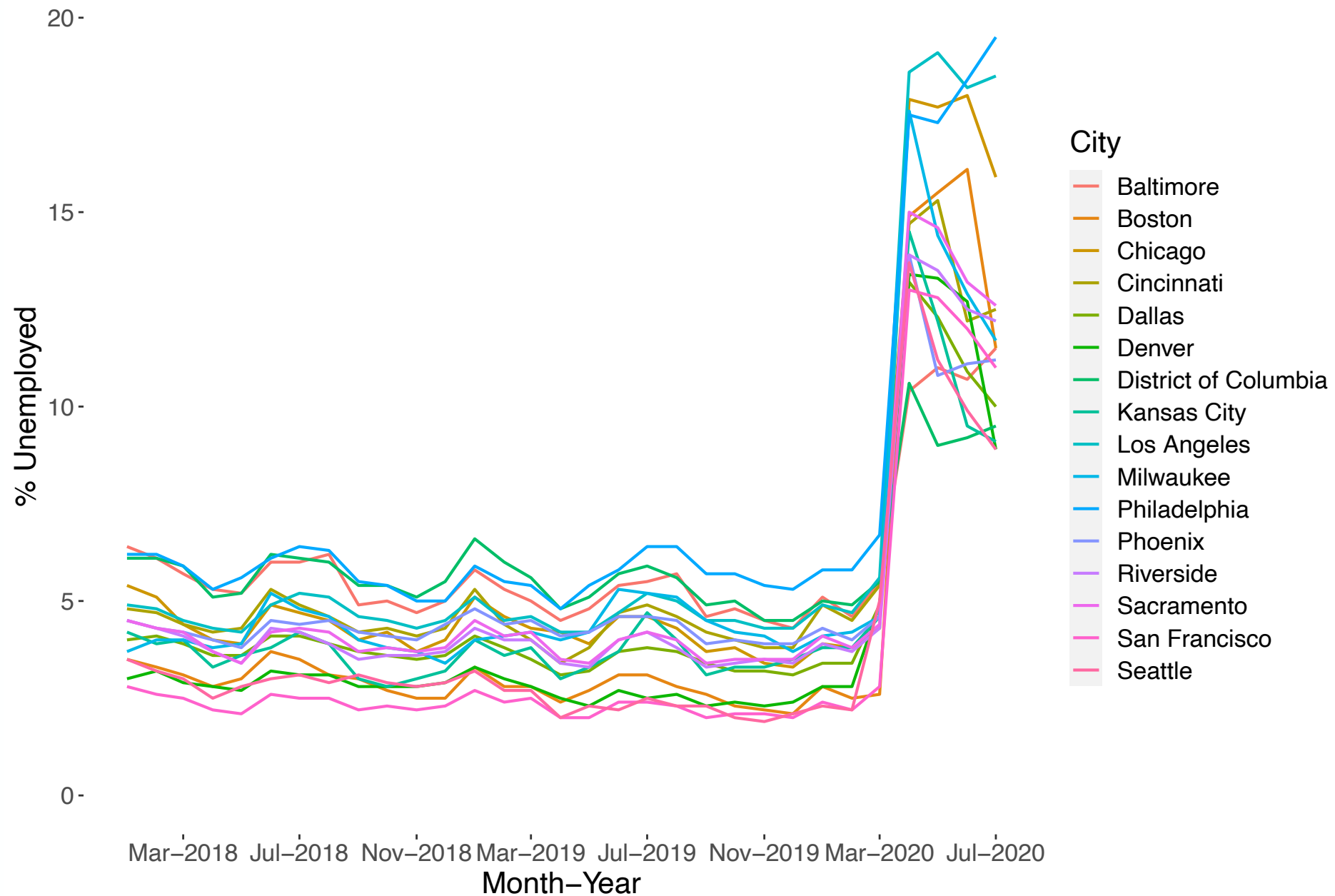
**Julia P. Schleimer · Veronica A. Pear · Christopher D. McCort ·
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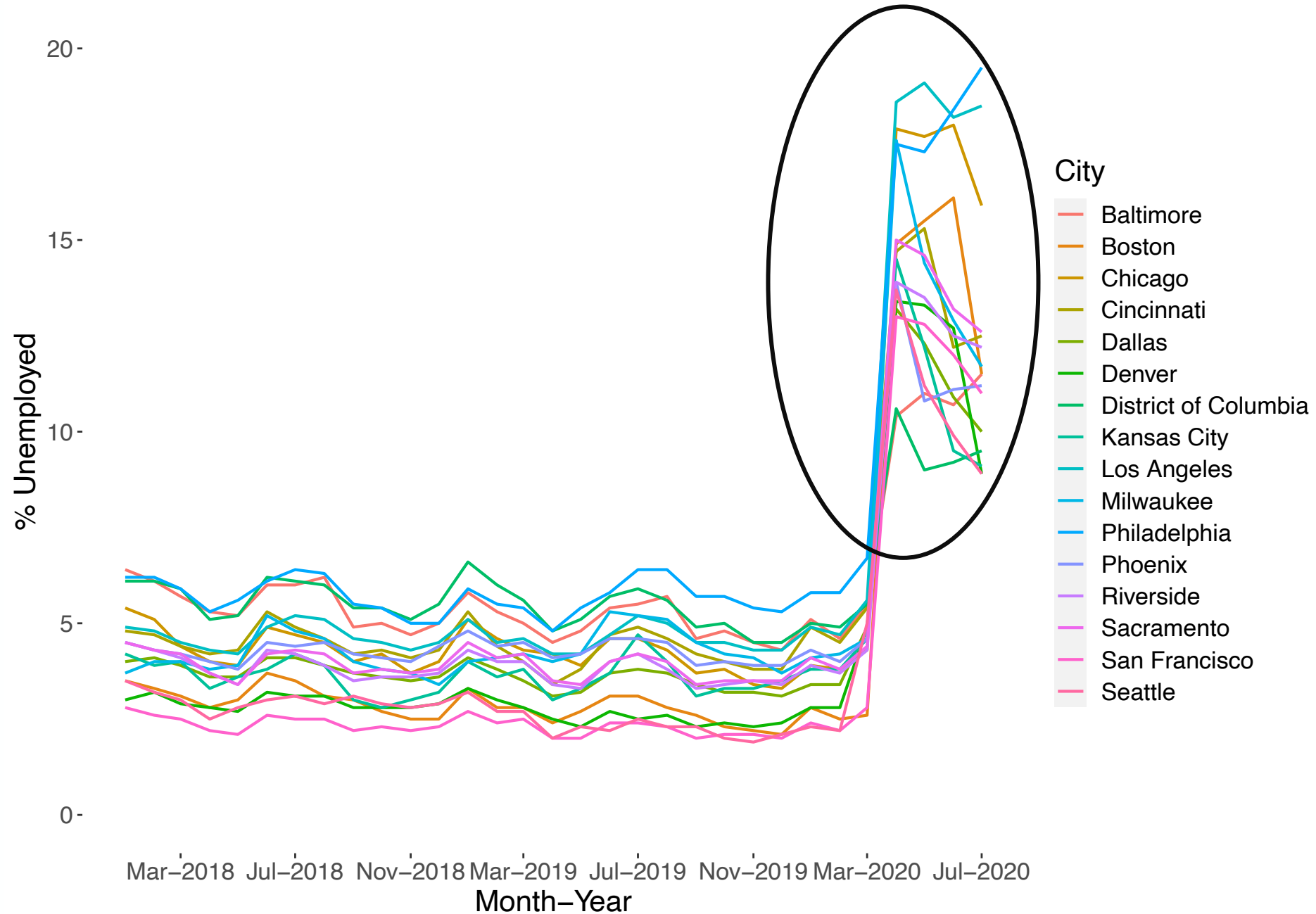
Why unemployment?

- Cross-sectionally, economic conditions are strong predictors of crime
- Unemployment surged during the first months of the pandemic, and many hypothesized a link with the rise in violence
- Better understanding the unemployment-crime relationship can inform prevention strategies

Research question

1. Were acute increases in unemployment during the pandemic associated with changes in crime rates among major US cities?





What is our best guess of how crime would have differed had **peak** unemployment levels in all cities been sustained for the entire 5-month period, March-July 2020, compared with actual unemployment?

On average per city each month from March to July 2020

- 3.3 more firearm violence incidents (95% CI – 0.2, 6.7)
- 2.0 more homicides (95% CI – 0.2, 3.9)

What is our best guess of how crime would have differed had the **lowest** unemployment levels in all cities been sustained for the entire 5-month period, March-July 2020, compared with actual unemployment?

On average per city each month from March to July 2020

- 8.4 fewer firearm violence incidents (95% CI – 16.6, 0.8)
- 4.5 fewer homicides (95% CI – 7.9, 0.7)

Key findings

- Marginalized communities endure endemically high levels of violence
- The events of 2020 exacerbated disparities in homicide, aggravated assault, and firearm violence
- The sharp increase in unemployment during the pandemic may have been associated with an increase in firearm violence and homicide, but not other crime

Implications & Future Research

- Recognize contexts that contribute to lasting inequities
- Invest in antiracist programs and policies that address economic inequality
- Evaluate potential impact on crime and violence

Acknowledgments

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