

## THE IDENTITARY CONFLICT AND THE NEW SECURITY CHALLENGES

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**Abstract:** *The paper develops a conceptual analysis covering a large scientific range regarding the identitary conflict and its components and last but not least, it introduces the new security challenges. The conflicts between identities are hierarchically classified by the time honoured scientific instruments and criteria, commencing from the most serious and legitimate sources in this field. The scientific approach is built in a systematic multi-disciplinary attempt, meant to identify both the favouring inner causes of the identitary conflicts and the real context in which they occur. The particular and axiological elements are supplemented with historic, geopolitical and sociological landmarks, in their dynamic nature. The independence of the present-day identitary conflict is therefore tackled from the angle of globalization and democracy-based changing processes in the life of the society, of a new economic geography of the states and the states' need of security against the grand backdrop of vanishing of the economic walls between nations. Furthermore, the paper introduces the solutions required for stopping the identitary conflicts and inhibiting their whirling dynamics upwards. The axiological mutations and ideological extremism are here taken in consideration related to the geopolitical transformations and security challenges. Also, we examined with a critical eye the phenomena of religious extremism, separatism, nationalism, anarchy and social anomy, regional insecurity.*

**Keywords:** *identitary conflicts, extremism, globalism, NATO, new asymmetric threats, multi-polar world.*

**T**he globalization process as a transitory phase for mankind bears the marks of sequential transformations and reforms which generated a series of tensions and some new types of emerging conflicts.

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In the past, the Napoleonic paradigm prevailed in the worldwide geopolitical scale, as a theoretical tool at least, claiming that „space rules politics”.

Even if this paradigm still works today, it was rather restructured somehow, so that „space” should be claimed and divided from the viewpoint of a new political and economic geography, crafted on the basis of some axiological models (identities) which basically are the ground for a brand new generation of identitary conflicts.

Conflicts are theoretical instruments employed by science to quantify a certain status, commencing from a principle of rights. Taking into account the space of crisis management and conflicts prevention, we shall further use a definition proposed by FEWER/FAST, which claims that there is no **crisis without a conflict-prone environment**, and that any crisis requires a **trigger** to break out. If **crises** are the acute portions of the conflicts, that is moment when fundamental values are highly jeopardized, calling for instant response and under pressure of the decision making entity **conflicts** remain those situations in which at least two actors wish at the same time the same thing, which they brawl for subsequently and for whose possession they are more than eager to spend resources and assume risks at any and all levels.

The causes that lead to the triggering of conflicts, according to the Stanislawski model are based (theoretically) on character items of the value and hierarchy attributes of some actor (or group): **Power, Resource, Prestige**. The advantage of this model consists in the interchangeability characteristic of the three itemized elements mentioned above. Within the space of conflicts and the contesting elements between the two actors, power shall be replaced by **authority**, as a coming back to the **charismatic power**, and the **prestige**, as **status**, in correlation with authority and elements of identity.

From the perspective of individual features - relational effects ratio, we have therefore, a sub-tier classification of the conflict grounds as follows:

- **conflicts of assignment - property**, those focused on resources, where the dispute is purely relational and is consumed on just one element incurring its exclusive ownership, that is the disjunctive sharing model: simply, the respective thing is divided, after conflict, one part going to one side and the other part to the other side, with nothing much

else substantially left at the intersection of the two properties (albeit there still remain some non shared portions in the aftermath process);

- **conflicts of authority - power**, when the two actors are wrestling to gain more authority on some space / community. This time, however, both sides are trying to maximize their own authority and to minimize the opponent's authority, without having to deal here with a constant sum, a quantified amount of authority, so that a raise in authority of one side does not lead implicitly to a lower degree of authority on the other side;

- **conflicts of status** - in this case, the conflict resides in the acknowledgement by the opponent one of some status, of some position in a hierarchy, of some importance associated to a certain status. In this case, the essential characteristic, the disputed feature is related mostly to the actor's own efforts, but it calls for an *erga omnes* validation - necessarily in order to become an actual conflict – that is, the validation of the second actor.

The origins of the deepest conflicts in history fall into the third category, due especially to the **symbolic payload** from the class of values, from the groups' attributes and interests. In this case, we deal with taxonomy of features depending on the symbolic value under debate, on a scale starting from the most basic, **primary existence** up to elements exclusively related to **hierarchy or power relations**. On this scale, the fiercest conflicts are found in the lower section of the scale, there where the very **group's existence**, its **identity**, are involved, the very **legitimacy** of its existence or its targets' inner reasons, of the claims and the **prestige**, the **charismatic power** and hierarchy-type attribute establishes *erga omnes* and which generates – besides **interests** - the capability of summoning from a political viewpoint, the outer support to reinforce the position engaged in conflict.

Therefore, we could say that in this regard **the identity conflicts** or **identity clashes** are conflicts in which the very identity of some actor is being debated or called into discussion. There are two fundamental types: **external**, where the two actors are hassling over identity recognition but also over the legitimacy of one of them or they make potential or actual moves for changing the counterpart's own identity, of the tradition as symbolic and institutional value of national / communitarian type undermining the social order deemed as base-plate

of the entire hierarchy waging the axiological war-identity focused and ideological war as well, and **internal**, in which the components of the community in question claim parallel identities, very often prefabricated. When these contesting identities **gain a basic political pitch**, the identity clashes get polarized, the „cultural” - symbolic factor putting itself under the political force command as an organisational and glue-together factor for these groups, communities respectively. The identity clashes typology is comprised of interethnic, inter-religious, and intercultural conflicts.

The geographical boundaries may no longer be set in this new age only by observing geostrategic criteria (i.e. the ex-Soviet space, the German space), economic criteria (the high-tech boom space, the energy resources space / raw material space), interests regarding “strategic interest space” or the security and defense hot situations (South -East Europe space, the Baltic Countries, the states from “VÍSEGRAD”, the “VILNIUS-10” states). Starting with the major events at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the political-administrative geography of Europe has changed with major implications on both the present and the future.

Seen from the strategic angle, space no longer represents today just a mere geographic acreage. Space had and still has a symbolic and political value, spiced with identity-axiological extra features, involving the status, the authority and the legitimacy of the political systems which are driving the states. National interests were defined, in the globalization frame, as being merely regional interests.

In this context, the identity clashes occurred indirectly and as a follow-up of the new wave in democracy and Euro-Atlantic push, as a form of kickback from the power centres that wished to maintain the *status - quo*. On the other hand, the states’ national role lost face in favour of the over-state groups (corporations), and of the sub-state group (minorities). Whereas the over-state groups represent the economy, prevailing over the political aspects - *recte* the liberal oligarchy, the sub-state groups involve a trend to regionalization and self-organizing communitarism, both aspects configured as factual evidence by products of the globalization process. The globalization of culture, of information, generates most serious identity shifts, concomitantly with large drifts of social, economic or just purely identity emancipation, bolstered with a strong liberal streak. All these transformations were beneficial, but they

also determined an asymmetric evolving dimension and a blossoming of secessionist trends, of non-legitimate entities of terrorist type or those having a subversive nature, which manifested in the life of the society as retrograde forces that were extremist, anti-democratic or fuelled by ethnic religious hatred and regional /sub-regional separatism. They flourished using the constitutional liberties leverage to their profit, but also taking advantage of the institutional gaps in order to wage terror and anarchy.

An important role in maintaining the peace and social cohesion is played by multiculturalism. This is the expression of *aculturalism*, and also of the intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, of respecting the right of anyone to confess and practice any religion whatsoever by promoting non-discriminatory politics. The religious beliefs may take political shapes that are both defensive and offensive, and when they develop amidst an anarchic social background, based on the ethnic component, communitarian, hierarchical, authoritarian organization, they manifest as an extremist, highly aggressive force.

The military and economic potential of the fundamentalist religious entities - generators of identity clashes, even full scale identity wars, originates in the money laundry and illegal cash transfers, organized crime, vacuumed power, institutional and security crisis, political corruption, insecurity and social / regional anarchy, the dissolution of the state authority, the volatility of the political milieu.

The components of the identity clash are: the ethnic-religious component, the socio-cultural component, the ideological - political component and the geopolitical component.

As an example, South Eastern Europe was traditionally set and renowned as a space of religious and ethnic-cultural interferences. This is where the religious and ethnic-cultural wide pools blend in Central and Eastern Europe specific features as well as the pools from Near and Middle East.

Taking into account the vigorous religious and ethnic-cultural identity, but also due to the major drives of these socio-cultural factors, required to define the interstate relationships, an emerging European policy loomed ahead to stabilize the area's zones and to implement democratic culture and norms as basic bricks of the modern society,

based on progress as a concept and the peaceful cohabitation in a safe and tranquil environment.

Thus, the laicization of the state institutions, the functionality of the rule of law state, the market economy, the respect for civil rights and liberties, the legal coverage of the fundamental human rights, the protection of minorities, crisis management, support the free thinking and conscience, the development of the democratic institutions, represented the geopolitical side of the reforms and transformations based on states' partnership to the Council of Europe, OSCE and PfP, which was marred by the resurrection of the ethnic-religious fundamentalism, of the ethnic-cultural tensions and local conflicts.

Among the causes of the identity clashes of ethnic-religious origin one may find the following ones: unbalanced ratios between ethnic-religious majority and minority by imposing a minority ruling local administration; territorial skirmishes; hampering of local and regional development; artificial building of some state or administrative-territorial and autonomous entities based on the minority's self-establishment based on ethnic-religious criteria, state and inter-state separatist trends with territorial delimitations observing pseudo-religious criteria purely ideological or political and, hacking off the religious assets by way of inter/intra-patriarchal quarrels, arguments boiling within the laic state and inside the fundamentalist structures.

The crash of Communism in the industrial societies in Europe and Central Asia favoured the religious moves revival. The Pan Arabian Move is currently reactivated and is generating the phenomenon generically known as "The Islamic Boom". A boom whose expansionist targets focused on the Central and Eastern Europe are as follows: controlling the main routes, commercial roads and centres between Europe and Asia, the planetary Ocean, Africa; the domination of an European space of strategic relevance; building up of a Muslim axis in South Eastern Europe, linked to the centre of Asia, the Middle East, the Near East and North Africa; getting involved in some military conflicts of such a nature so as to engage the clash of the civilizations.

While in ex-Yugoslavia, as anywhere within the Balkan space, nationalism acted as an obstacle for the NATO and EU rampant, the mentality of the federal identity went to its apex in the ex-Soviet space with identity conflicts of ethnic nature and former rivalries over some

territories and sub-regions inhabited by various ethnics of the states just turned loose of the ex-USSR which severely resented the identity clash which behaved like a true major, ethnic component, still paying tribute to the old Soviet ways to purify and des-nationalize.

Nationalism, as a cultural and axiological system, one of the sources of the identity clashes, is replaced with the religious beliefs system, energized by proselytism and expansion, as a reaction to the man's identity crisis. This aspect is visible in Mohammedan states, but it is equally notorious that the development of some religious fundamentalist - extremist groups is based on sectarian principles and political motivations and aims, respectively.

In this space of the identity clashes, we witness today a recrudescence of the battle between the ex-Soviet elite and the national elite of the newly emerged states.

The themes and topics of identity clashes are complex as they are by other factors no less important. Therefore, the geostrategic findings on identity reflect the dynamic evolution from one system of values to another, which should not be regarded separately or as being parallel to the prominent political structures and forces, but rather in a relationship of interdependence.

### **New Asymmetric Threats to the Global Security at horizon**

Nowadays, international security is a milieu widely open to the strategic opportunities resulted from the global competition between the big powers. The uni-polar world is counterbalanced by the multi-polar world. The European Union and the Far East represent new power poles in actual development and recast. The disappearance of the economic barriers and the ideology blocks between states and some group of states have raised both the risk and the need for security in Europe, the trend being a sweeping democratic wave through the entire world. The security crisis in Ukraine represents a test for Occident, and a way by which Russia, as a conflict fabricator seeks to enforce its hegemonic strategic interests. It is clear that the season is open for competition between the Eurasian and the Euramerican zones. Ukraine makes up just some pretext from the viewpoint of purely political justification of Russia, since from the economic, geostrategic and geopolitical angle Ukraine is seen as some spatial vector through which Russia acts to proactively menace the

economy, stability and the security of the European Union and the entire Europe.

On the other hand, Ukraine is currently experimenting the modern practices of information warfare, economic warfare and energy warfare, as well as planned diversions, sabotage, or media warfare.

Russia seeks economic interests only and defends its economic interests infringing the Ukraine's national sovereign status by fuelling a hybrid war under the shelter of the international right principle, by way of involving special forces and perfectly camouflaged mercenaries and without any identification marks or tokens, which using specialized diversion means could invoke the counterterrorist argument for taking over the „responsibility" of the triggered warfare, so that they could further avoid the legal - military consequences incurred by any classical warfare, which violates the international rights principle and other internationally endorsed treaties.

Beside its hegemonic interests, Russia actually seeks to deploy a strategic foreplay on multiple plans by which to put forward its own political-economic aims and to represent a world actor currently in a global competition with no prominent globalization leader yet looming ahead.

So, what Russia fails to comprehend is that the Western World represents a values system where the mentality of the Old World finds no more support.

The new threats to the international security are based on the terrorism sustained from black money and corruption which rake the newly hatched democracies, the criminality and the economic oligarchy which incur damage to citizens' rights and liberties, undermining national sovereignty. Russia turned out as one of the world class exporters of insecurity, across the border criminal activities, corruption and across economy organized crime, gun smuggling, algorithmic terrorism and a strategic alliance of the anti-globalization group's ideological extremism.

The new global threats are a consequence of the world polarization, but also a hassle between the closed ideological systems and those that are open and free.

Although Russia claims economic supremacy, it is still the promoter of a corrupted oligarchy tributary to a bureaucratic, hyper-centralized, clumsy Mafia.

The international terrorism and the conflicts which marred the South East Europe, the Middle East, the North Africa, Georgia, South Osetia always telltales about the struggle of some nations for the democratic values and further transition to a new political and economic system meant to represent an alternative not just purely geopolitical and ideological, but also securing the wealth of the applicant societies and being institutionally decentralized and corruption-free to warrant fair chances for everyone and to guarantee and free access to education, information and resources, providing a competitive and transparent milieu.

The transformation of the world into political-military and ideological blocks is no longer a long-term solution now, as it is perceived just as a utopia oriented against progress.

World security cannot be accomplished just under the conditions provided in the Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance, the solidarity of the entire international community being put to test, which should not fall in the trap of some geopolitical games leading the world back to an age of belligerence, and a re-division of the globe in spheres of influence. The economic, innovative, technical-scientific and spiritual discoveries of the Occident are way too important and made with sacrifices, to be thus subdued in a battle of a purely ideological and reactionary type.

There are signals that Russia is willing to build a Eurasian Empire comprising Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Bulgaria, Slovakia and other possible countries. Greece is lured to an obscure sphere of influence, due to its economic status. These scenarios are dangerous, yet Russia's target certainly is to discourage Europe (EU) which should not fall into the adversary's logic trap, be it an ideological only, manifested in the first stage of the forefront and propaganda as we were able to see just at the level of some North Korean leaders.

**Special Features of the Identity Clashes. The geo-economic component and sociologic aspects - in the context of globalization and the EU dynamics.**

It is unanimously accepted that between the member states of the European Union there is a heterogeneity status, both where the economic-social development is concerned, and with regard to their respective political approaches. On the other hand, integration belongs as well to what was about to exceed the Ricardian vision on the world's economy. However, one may find that the Ricardian model applies without distinctions between nations which results in an out of the borders commercial flow, be it just a simple international trading exchange, or else if one proceeds to a customs office union, as lower phase of the economic integration. The integration may mean less some international assembly, but rather a regional process instead, which, since the structural and regional development political instrument is missing, there is some risk of uneven developments and further disintegration, so that the European Union as a power centre might act like a macro-economy where the component regions shall be heterogenic, the unique market and the competition, declared as its main objectives, shall crash into the modern economy of today, their perfect opposite, in fact the mixed economy, of the authoritarian interventionism.

From this viewpoint various development models were and still are being projected and the solutions cannot be but global, based on co-ordination and co-operation, the autarchic trends being utterly unrealistic and inefficient. According to some research performed by experts in their fields, the EU expansion bound to the Central Eastern Europe countries led to heightening of regional disparities, with implications on cohesive policies at both European and regional levels. That is why a series of specialists propose an evaluation of the new theories such as: the new theory on commerce, the new economic geography, the foreign direct investment theory. Factors such as technologies, salaries and the proximity to the industrial centres in the regions with geostrategic importance and the EU markets contribute to an explanation of the economic geography in the new member states. Some surveys reveal the fact that the markets integration multiplied the divergent forces, therefore leading to heightening or regional disparities in Hungary, for instance. The same surveys highlight the fact that the process of internationalization and structural change is expected to favour the

metropolitan zones and the Westward regions, as well the regions having a strong industrial base or the countries closed to the East-West border.

In the context of economic integration becoming harder and harder, as a perpetual process, a territorial rearrangement process is taking place, while the role of the obsolete national borders grows dimmer. The phenomenon and the process were concept-cast as 'border spiritualization.' So, the complexity of the Euro-Atlantic international relationships, Euro-American, Euro-Asian and European, the political-economic interdependence of the states, zones and regions become, inside the globalization frame, an irreversible process. The displacement of the production means is resented especially where they are leaving, yet even the destination of this drift inside the EU is getting „the new economic geography model”- region of the industrial cluster union, in opposition to the other regions, pushed on to the „periphery”, being manifest at work *centripetal forces* and those *centrifuge from the negative competition*. However, this geo-economic context should not be ideology-clad. The world polarization is real, and the risk it should generate identity conflicts on the background of its clad-in-ideology is real, this having a known precedent in history. The traditional division “the poor versus the rich”, be it generations or social classes, against a rather tight-doctrine backdrop, has borne for a while, a Marxist and Catholic dimension, widely spread and propagated by both state forces and the sectarian entities of even the criminal organizations which ideologically exploited the social-economic status of un-favoured categories. The economically “resurrected” societies are based on pragmatism, while those underdeveloped, pauperized, are far too addicted to ideology, without solutions though, nor some degree of social cohesion or mobilization.

The trend towards the progressive elimination of the economic barriers between states heightens the need for security, in the context of discouragement of the identity clashes, the external threats being coupled with internal depreciative and worsening factors, stimulated by strategic political mistakes, institutional and social instability.

The new political-economic realities throughout South-Eastern Europe enforce the following directions of action: long lasting development, economic and energetic security, the development of the border zone infrastructure, the continuity of the economic reforms, both institutional and structural, fighting organized crime, decentralization of the resources at the centre, locally, the valorizing of the intellectual capital, the stimulation of the private initiative, providing social security and not in the last place the building up of the facilities and institutions with innovative character, by valorizing the human and technological wealth.

From the geopolitical viewpoint, the European security and cooperation is under menace of global threats of external type, competition and confrontation between the geo-economic zones being some of them; however, one should not underestimate the domestic danger factor, the reactivation of extremist ideological forces which incur axiological mutations and power games with long term strategic impact.

The change of civilization status forces us at conceptual level to operate from a multi-dimensional perspective. The necessity to lay foundation for a new strategy for reaching global security derives from the theoretical and practical hypothesis of energizing the interdependences, interactions and implicitly of the ever-increasing asymmetrical threats, risk factors at the world level and the identity clashes across the global anomic state background, in the context of global transition.

Mankind crosses a historical process of individualization, the perfect reverse of uniformization, from which the institutions were born.

The institutions and the static concepts are made obsolete in front of the brand new life style, highly energetic, increasingly individualized and under the global trends of administrative decentralization, social economic self-administration by way of creation of some autonomous communities based on promotion of network-type structures, multi-mesh, anti-authoritarian, anti-hierarchic and polycentric in some special cases.

At the same time, sociologists insist on the “worldwide turbulence” concept or “anomic status” when they mean global anarchy.

In other words, the denial of authority phenomenon, denial of any kind of order and heteronomous connections slowly lead up to an objective reality, and this would rather become a historic-conceptual base for claiming the driving forces at the roots of generation of the new identity clashes, the axiological and behaviour action code in the global space.

Globalization, however, is challenging our judgment with two main aspects: social autonomy and losing the executive decision making control, from those institutions labelled as „obsolete paradigm” on individuals and mostly on under-statal, subversive, interest-based groups, which may lead to the growth of some erratic power centres, autarchic, ready to fuel both the local egotism and global plutocracies, the supra-statal entities, and to change the democratic balances, therefore jeopardizing the regional security, and interregional, respectively.

The insecurity sources may be multiple, since the global togetherness accomplished by way of pluralist forms of co-operation commencing from the integrative component of economic togetherness, social and international politics, being rather mechanistic and arbitrary would rather lead not to gradual cultural, psychological, social, political and moral-religious dissolution, cleavage and fragmenting, but on the contrary, to their reinforcement.

This is why the culture of security awareness, the multiculturalism, the intercultural dialogue, and negotiation, the bolstering of the control mechanisms, communication and social justice inner workings, and also the defensive deterrence may lead to hedging of the identity clashes. It should be understood that a democratic society does not exclude control, as the social control is a juridical sociology concept, pointing at the same time the passage from the state’s purely political control to the Control Society.

Far from being a failure, multiculturalism knows a profound and remarkable revival from a non-formal viewpoint. The transfer of the

state's executive authority from the unique, central level to the micro societal local level may generate risks for the social and statal security of each national entity, especially because any potential source is exploited by a rampant, fiercely competing power, the potential relative offsets being readily speculated and capitalized across all the interested segments by the special interests' groups and entities.

All these facts lead to a mistaken re-sharing of power, the administrative capacity not being reinforced, but on the contrary, disintegrated by autarchic, anarchic or centrifugal factors and, mostly, especially and mainly in those zones where the groups that operate are led by oligarchic rules, which parasite on the social system.

Sociologists are somewhat right regarding the global anomic status ('worldwide turbulence'), under the conditions of society polarization, of popping up of new identity groups, new political, social and cultural values, which clash and engage in opposition with the traditional values of the "old" world.

All these aspects actually show a change of the civilization status, implicitly of the social historical landmarks' parameters.

### **The road to new conflicts**

The identity clashes marked the history of the last 10-20 years with the emergence of several conflicts (even armed ones) - of an inter-ethnic, separatist nature but also some new types of identity clashes, came in the same package with the progressive deepening of the differences between neighbours and the rebuke of compatibility-tuning process at the newly hatched NATO frontier.

It is essential to underline that the identity clashes dynamics projected across the strategic interest space depends in its evolution on the manner the following favourable causes should be taken into account:

- a lack of political, economic, religious and ethnic-cultural homogeneity, which calls for programs and strategies of long lasting specific development by an effective valorization of the local and regional resources;

- the regional and power unbalances require collective and harmonizing solutions, establishing the European, zone, and regional institutional responsibilities, for a state and over-state management with the purpose of regional development.

One single regional or even global actor cannot effectively handle the entire array of topics and aspects and mostly it could not stand the political - economic - military pressure and interests swarming outside the reference zone.

- reducing the development offset between regions, securing the access to education, implementation of policies concerning human rights and the norms of the civic culture in community, concomitantly with the promotion of cohesion and social mobilization, the reconstruction of the community spirit, legal protection of the fundamental rights, represent as many instruments in the hands of decision-makers to be construed as programmatic and inter-dependent efforts for the prevention of identity clashes with social, political and general implications.

- the lack of true reforms, of local administrative capabilities, of development of civil society and its involvement in projects and programs on implementation of formal/non formal dialogue, of tolerance and inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, the failure to secure the rights for minorities and encouraging secessionist trends or the development of some forms of economic autonomy, based on the ethnic criterion as a result of the lowering the degree of state involvement in fair processes of tightly woven development of the society and resource fair-share.

As for the global situation, the following solutions for further prevention and eradication of the identity clashes are mandatory: the pursuance of inter-state and inter-religious dialogue, the preservation of multiculturalism and the identity of each nation as it is, the long lasting development, financing the building of new democratic institutions, the bolstering and enhancement of the administrative power's efficiency, removing the legal and power vacuum, the creation of social control mechanisms, the proactive fight against corruption and the

global/regional anomy, the creation of an area security complex on a partnership based on inter/intra-regional (statal) dialogue and cooperation, on full observance of both majority and minority rights and liberties bereft of any positive or negative discrimination whatsoever and not least the promotion of the security awareness culture.

Also, it is required to further keep using legal, military and economic enforcement for keeping at bay the stray groups which threat the regional and global security.

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