

DISTRIBUTION, EMPHASIS AND POSSIBLE INTERACTIONS AMONG TOURISM RESEARCH CENTRES IN MERCOSUL

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to present an overview about the existence and the likely interactions of Tourism Research Centres (TRC) among the Mercosul countries, as a prerequisite of innovations in tourism field. It was used a quantitative and qualitative method of analysis. As a result it was found an asymmetrical distribution of TRC between the countries, with nonspecific emphasis and no relation to each other. In this regard the institutionalization stage of knowledge production in tourism, as a precondition of its development, is still incipient.

Keywords: Tourism. Educational offer. Research Centre. Knowledge.

DISTRIBUIÇÃO, ÊNFASE E POSSÍVEIS INTERAÇÕES ENTRE OS CENTROS DE INVESTIGAÇÃO EM TURISMO DO MERCOSUL

Resumo

O objetivo deste paper é apresentar um panorama da presença e das interações existentes entre Centros de Pesquisa em Turismo (CPT) entre os países do Mercosul, como pré-requisito de inovações no campo do turismo. Foi utilizado um método quantitativo e qualitativo de análise. Como resultado, verificou-se uma distribuição assimétrica dos CPTs entre os países, com ênfase inespecífica e sem relação uns com os outros. Neste contexto, o estágio de institucionalização da produção de conhecimento em turismo, como condição prévia para o seu desenvolvimento, ainda é incipiente.

Palavras-chave: Turismo. Oferta educativa. Centro de Pesquisa. Conhecimento.

DISTRIBUCIÓN, ÉNFAIS Y LAS POSIBLES INTERACCIONES ENTRE CENTROS DE INVESTIGACIÓN EN TURISMO EN EL MERCOSUR

Resumen

El propósito de este paper es presentar un panorama general de la presencia y las probables interacciones de los Centros de Investigación de Turismo (CIT) de los países del Mercosur, como requisito previo a las innovaciones en el campo del turismo. Se utilizó un método de análisis cuantitativo y cualitativo. Como resultado, se ha observado que hay una distribución asimétrica de CIT entre los países, con énfasis inespecífica y sin relación entre ellos. En este contexto, la etapa de institucionalización de la producción de conocimiento del turismo como una condición previa para su desarrollo aún es incipiente.

Palabras clave: Turismo. Oferta educativa. Centro de Investigación. Conocimiento.



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(The data of the other coauthors are in the end of the text).

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to offer overview the presence and the likely interactions of Tourism Research Centres (TRC) among the Mercosul (Mercado Comum do Sul) countries. Technological and social innovations are essential to allow the countries positioning. It is assumed that the interaction between TRC contribute to increase the generation of technologies, concerning the quantity and quality of studies and techniques developed in the tourism field.

This article brings the progress of an on-going investigation. It was (1) identified and quantified existing RTCs in Mercosul countries; (2) specified the area of knowledge that characterizes each one; (3) compared their emphases of studies and appoint the possible integration between them; (4) identified the existence of formal relations between these centres and the results of those interactions.

This research is justified by the need of timely knowledge production in South America, particularly in Mercosul (FREY, 2014). Likewise, the partnership between the RTCs in these countries, could distribute information and exchange experiences in the tourism sector. Such knowledge could, empirically, contribute to trend tourism growth, since it is needed a deeper understanding of reality to provide an institutional research agenda and guide investments of the tourism industry.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

In general knowledge is produced in universities, research centres, or other organizations responsible for perpetrating the discovering of new techniques, innovating strategies and making comparisons of theory with practice.

Research encourages the epistemological and methodological curiosity, leading to a critical view on its subject, and therefore the motivation to interfere in the reality (FREIRE, 1996).

To boost knowledge in the field of tourism, it is essential a joint work between research centres, universities and the governmental sphere. Tribe (2002) proposes that industry and society must be addressed in tourism core curriculum. Moreover

tourism education also needs to provide students with a dynamic learning experience that will enable them to operate sustainably and effectively in a fast-changing and service-intensive sector (LIBURD; HJALAGER, 2010, p. 13).

In the knowledge society, epistemological and socio-cultural issues increases their significance in a way that affects the nature of knowledge in education (PETROVA et al., 2015). Thus there is a clear necessity of having new possibilities to facilitate wider capacity of building knowledge through education related to the assistance of tourism industry (AIREY, 2008).

The integration of research centres can be a way of generating data, relevant information and new technologies for the tourism industry, contributing to the development of tourism in diverse countries, not only in the economic sense, but in integration of strategies of human development and democratic participation in tourism destinations.

3 METHODOLOGY

A quantitative-qualitative methodology allowed a comprehensive study of the reality. It was analysed the amount of RTCs, and then interpreted these data according to their respective categories (VEAL, 2011). Thus it was established the probable relations between the Mercosul's RTC with emphasis to tourism development in Latin America.

Firstly, it was hold an exploratory and descriptive method, which followed the application of a survey (GIL, 1995). The sample for data collection consisted of 2813 Higher Education Institutions (HEI): 130 in Argentina; 2407 in Brazil; 65 in Paraguay; 37 in Uruguay and 174 in Venezuela.

To select the HEI of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, it was used the government census of declared HEI existing in each country.

The phases of this stage were: (1) raising the number of universities in each country, (2) examining of the electronic site of the HEI to verify how many and which tourism courses there were, in which department or unit they were setup, and within with RTC has linked, among other categories. It was applied the technical content analysis (GIL, 1995), to quantify the existing RTCs and identify their areas of knowledge. It was developed a research protocol according to Pimentel and Paula (2014), through which it was collected, sorted and classified the universities and their RTCs, based in the previously stipulated themes identified by earlier studies (PIMENTEL, 2013).

Based on the identification of the TRC and the description of its features, it was expected to find

networks and viable integration between these research centres.

This research had some limitations. The fact that it was undergone through internet restricted the possibility of universities found to be those that were available on the net. The data found in each university were also strictly available on the official websites of the HEI. It is possible, for example, that the collected information was not updated.

4 ANALYSIS

4.1 Background

Mercosul countries produces most of research about tourism in Latin American, except for México (MINISTRY OF TOURISM, 2013), having recently promoted the connection of networks of researchers and institutions within the tourism experts from diverse countries (Cf. CLAIT¹, 2012, 2014; Anptur, 2012, 2013, 2014).

Besides to commercial objectives – the free movement of goods, services and factors of production, the establishment of a Common External Tariff (CET), the adoption of a common commercial policy (MERCOSUL, 2013) – the Mercosul provides a broad platform for discussion and the development of joint actions on many topics, such as education, culture, environment, among others, including tourism (LANIADO and SANTOS, 2012). These formal relations facilitate the integration of countries, including the area of scientific production.

The Mercosul was formed in 1994 as a custom union of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay in the South America. On July 2012 Venezuela joined as a fifth member, due to the temporary suspension of Paraguay on the block.

According Tomazzoni, Patrucco and Buhler (2014), the Treaty of Asunción, which marks the formation of the block, set for the creation of Mercosul ten subgroups for the coordination of macroeconomic and sectorial policies. Nevertheless, tourism does not appear as a specific group, probably because it is not considered one of the priority sectors of the macroeconomic policies of Mercosul.

¹ The Latin America Congress of Tourism Research and the Seminar of the Brazilian Association of tourism post graduation programs and Tourism Research are examples of two events that have been happening with regularity in the last decade and is promotion knowledge exchanging between the Latin America countries, as well as with researchers of other nationalities.

To establish a new scenario, this study aims to highlight the importance of knowledge production in tourism, as an efficient way to promote and develop tourism and social activity in South America.

4.2 RTC and interrelations in Mercosul

The interaction between the Mercosul countries in the field of tourism can be possible through the production of knowledge in the RTC. This could be understood from the relations of partnerships and networks and their joint production. From this research it was possible to examine and think over the deals related to such a possibility.

4.2.1 Argentina

Argentina has 130 public and private HEIs. 46.15% of the universities of the country have some kind of course or training in the tourism field. It was identified 9 RTC, established in different universities and focused on different thematic areas, representing 13.24% of the sample (Table 1).

Table 1: Tourism Research Centres in Argentina.

HEI	Name	Tipe	Thematic Area
Universidad Nacional de General San Martín	Centro de Investigación y Desarrollo del Turismo (CIDeTur-EEyN)	Observatory	Economics and Management
Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia San Juan Bosco	Observatorio de Economía y Administración del Turismo (OBSECATUR – GETACE)	Observatory	Economics and Management
Universidad de la Cuenca del Plata	Observatorio Económico y Social	Observatory	Economics and Management
Universidad Nacional de Lanús	Observatorio Turístico de Argentina (Observatur)	Observatory	Economics and Management
Universidade de Comahue	Centro de Estudio del Conocimiento e Innovación Empresarial Turístico (CECIET)	Research Centre	Economics and Management
Universidad Nacional de Lanús	Centro Internacional de Estudios sobre Turismo y Desarrollo (CIETyD)	Research Centre	Tourism Planning
Universidad Nacional del	Centro de Estudios para la	Research Centre	Tourism Planning

Table 1 –continue...

Comahue	Planificación y el Desarrollo Turístico Sustentable – CEPLADES		
Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata	Centro de Investigaciones Turísticas	Research Centre	General Tourism
Universidad Nacional de la Plata	Instituto de Investigaciones en Turismo	Institute	General Tourism

Source: Elaborated from the survey data.

4.2.2 Brazil

In Brazil there were identified 2407 graduate institutions, concerning public and private education systems. It was observed that 347 of these HEIs had a tourism course, being 14.41% of the country's universities. There are 57 RTC, focusing on various themes, which were concentrated in 0.62% of the country sample) universities. These RTCs are distributed in thematic areas (Table 2).

Table 2: Tourism Research Centres in Brazil.

HEI	Name	Type	Thematic Area
Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora	COGITO - Conhecimento, Gestão e Turismo	Research Group	Social Science
Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora	Observatório Econômico e Social do Turismo (OEST)	Observatory	Social Science
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte	ESCRITUR - Estudos Críticos em Turismo	Research Group	Social Science
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro	Turismo, Ciências Sociais e Patrimônio	Research Group	Social Science
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro	Grupo de Estudos em Turismo e Sociedade	Research Group	Social Science
Universidade Federal Fluminense	T-Cult Turismo, Cultura e Sociedade – UFF	Research Group	Social Science
Universidade Federal do Paraná	Turismo e Sociedade	Research Group	Social Science
Universidade do Vale do Itajaí	TES - Turismo, Espaço e Sociedade	Research Group	Social Science
Universidade do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte	Gestão Organizacional e Pesquisa Quantitativa em Turismo - GOPQTu	Research Group	Economics and Management
Universidade Federal do	Grupo de Estudos em	Research Group	Social Science

Table 2 –continue...

Rio Grande do Norte	Gestão do Turismo (GESTUR)		
Universidade Federal de São Carlos	Observatório do Turismo do Estado de São Paulo (OTURESP)	Observatory	Economics and Management
Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro	Gestão Empresarial, Turismo e Desenvolvimento Sustentável	Research Group	Social Science
Universidade Federal Fluminense	Observatório do Turismo do Rio de Janeiro	Observatory	Economics and Management
Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de Santa Catarina	GPGTUR - Grupo de Pesquisa em Gestão do Turismo	Research Group	Economics and Management
Universidade Anhembi Morumbi	Núcleo de Pesquisa - Escola de Negócios e Hospitalidade (área temática de pesquisa em Serviços e Organizações)	Research Centre	Social Science
Universidade de São Paulo	Pesquisa, Educação e Atuação Profissional em Turismo e Hospitalidade	Research Group	Education
Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Norte	Hospitalidade, Turismo e Educação Profissional	Research Group	Education
Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Sul	GECIT - Educação, cidadania e turismo	Research Group	Education
Universidade Caxias do Sul	Turismo: Desenvolvimento Humano e Social, Linguagem e Processos Educacionais	Research Group	Education
Universidade do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte	Grupo de Pesquisas em Lazer, Turismo e Trabalho - GEPLAT/UERN	Research Group	Entertainment/Leisure
Universidade de São Paulo	Cultura e Arte no Lazer e Turismo	Research Group	Entertainment/Leisure
Instituto	Grupo de Estudo	Research	Geography

Table 2 –continue...

Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Ceará	de Geografia, História e Turismo	Group	
Universidade e Federal Fluminense	TGTur - Turismo: Gestão e Territórios	Research Group	Geography
Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de Brasília	Núcleo de Pesquisa em Turismo e Hospitalidade do IFB	Research Group	Hospitality
Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Ceará	Gestão do Turismo e da Hospitalidade nos Territórios	Research Group	Hospitality
Universidade e Anhembi Morumbi	Núcleo de Pesquisa Hospitalidade (área temática de pesquisa em Processos e Práticas)	Research Centre	Hospitality
Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Ceará	ICTA – Identidades Culturais, Turismo e Alimentos	Research Group	Cultural Heritage
Universidade e Estadual do Ceará	Gestão Integrada da Zona Costeira	Research Group	Tourism Planning
Universidade e do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte	Gestão e planejamento Sustentável do Turismo	Research Group	Tourism Planning
Universidade e Federal do Rio Grande do Norte	Gestão, Turismo e Políticas Públicas – GEPOLISTUR	Research Group	Tourism Planning
Universidade e Federal da Paraíba	Desenvolvimento, planejamento e turismo	Research Group	Tourism Planning
Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia do Pernambuco	Políticas Públicas do Turismo	Research Group	Tourism Planning
Universidade e Federal do Rio Grande do Norte	Grupo de Pesquisa em Planejamento e Organização do Turismo – GEPPOT	Research Group	Tourism Planning
Universidade e de São Paulo	Teorização do Planejamento Territorial do Turismo	Research Group	Tourism Planning
Universidade e do Vale do Itajaí	PLAGET - Planejamento e Gestão do Espaço Turístico	Research Group	Tourism Planning
Universidade de Brasília	Observatórios para o turismo	Observatory	Natural Resources

Table 2 –continue...

	sustentável		
Universidade Estadual de Roraima	Laboratório de Turismo, Ecologia e Meio Ambiente da Universidade Estadual de Roraima (LabTEMA)	Research Group	Natural Resources
Universidade Federal dos Vale do Jequitinhonha e Mucuri	Destinos Turísticos e Sustentabilidade	Research Group	Natural Resources
Universidade Federal Fluminense	Turismo, Meio Ambiente Urbano e Inclusão Social – TURis	Research Group	Natural Resources
Universidade Federal do Paraná	Planejamento, Gestão e Controle do Desenvolvimento Sustentável do Turismo	Research Group	Natural Resources
Universidade do Vale do Itajaí	HOGAST- Grupo de Pesquisa Hotelaria, Gastronomia e Serviços Turísticos	Research Group	Tourism Services
Universidade de Brasília	Centro de Excelência em Turismo (CET)	Research Centre	General Tourism
Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica Suckow da Fonseca	Laboratório de Turismo	Laboratory	General Tourism
Fundação Universidade Federal do Pampa	Laboratório de Turismo – Labortur	Laboratory	General Tourism
Universidade Federal de Pelotas	Laboratório de pesquisa	Laboratory	General Tourism
Faculdade Educacional de Cornélio Procópio	Núcleo de Planejamento Turístico	Research Centre	General Tourism
Pontifícia Universidade Católica Paraná	Núcleo de Estudos e Pesquisas em Turismo	Research Centre	General Tourism
Universidade Estadual do Piauí	NETUR - Núcleo de Estudos, Pesquisas e Projetos em Turismo	Research Group	Others
Universidade de São Paulo	Avaliação Pedagógica Permanente em Relações Públicas, Propaganda e Turismo	Research Group	Others
Universidade Federal de Alagoas	Observatório Transdisciplinar de Pesquisas em Turismo	Research Group	Others

Table 2 –continue...

Universidade de São Paulo	Turismo Internacional	Research Group	Others
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro	INTERTUR - Pesquisas Interdisciplinares em Turismo e Cidades	Research Group	Others
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro	Turismo, Direito e Desenvolvimento	Research Group	Others
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro	Grupo Transportes e o Turismo	Research Group	Others
Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro	Grupo de Pesquisa Espaço, Imagem e Turismo	Research Group	Others
Universidade Federal Fluminense	Histur - Laboratório de História do Turismo	Research Group	Others
Universidade Federal do Paraná	Turismo, Tecnologia, Informação, Comunicação e Conhecimento – TURITEC	Research Group	Others

Source: Elaborated from the survey data.

4.2.3 Paraguay

Paraguay has 65 public and private educational institutions of which 18 have some kind of course or training in tourism, that represents 27.69% of the universities. Linked to these courses there was not any RTC.

4.2.4 Uruguay

In Uruguay there are 37 public and private institutions. Among these there are 13 HEI that offer tourism courses, which represents 35.13% of the universities of the country. HEIs have only one RTC, which focuses on economics and management (Table 3).

Table 3: Tourism Research Centres in Uruguay.

HEI	Name	Type	Thematic Area
Universidad Católica Del Uruguay "Damaso Antonio Larrañaga"	Centro de Investigación en Marketing y Turismo (CIMYT)	Research Centre	Economics and Management

Source: Elaborated from the survey data.

4.2.5 Venezuela

Venezuela has 174 public and private institutions, and 49 have some kind of course or training in tourism, representing 28.16% of the country's universities analysed. It was identified one RTC, that represents 0.57% among the HEIs (Table 4).

Table 4: Tourism Research Centers in Venezuela.

HEI	Name	Type	Thematic Area
Colegio Universitario "Hotel Escuela de Los Andes Venezolanos"	CENINTUR - Centro Nacional de Investigaciones Turísticas	Research Centre	Tourism Service

Source: Elaborated from the survey data.

4.3 Discussion

There is a low incidence of formal TRCs in the Mercosul countries. Brazil have most of it, however, it may be related to its territorial size and the amount of HEIs.

Regarding the distribution of CPT in each country, according to their highlights (Figure 1), there is a thematic concentration on two poles: on one hand it emphasizes what was described as "tourism in general" - which in fact means the absence of specification of emphasis in relation to tourism, covering the discussion of all matters related to the phenomenon. It prevails in the block and is current in Argentina and Brazil. Still, it tends to have a concentration of RTC around the theme "economics and management".

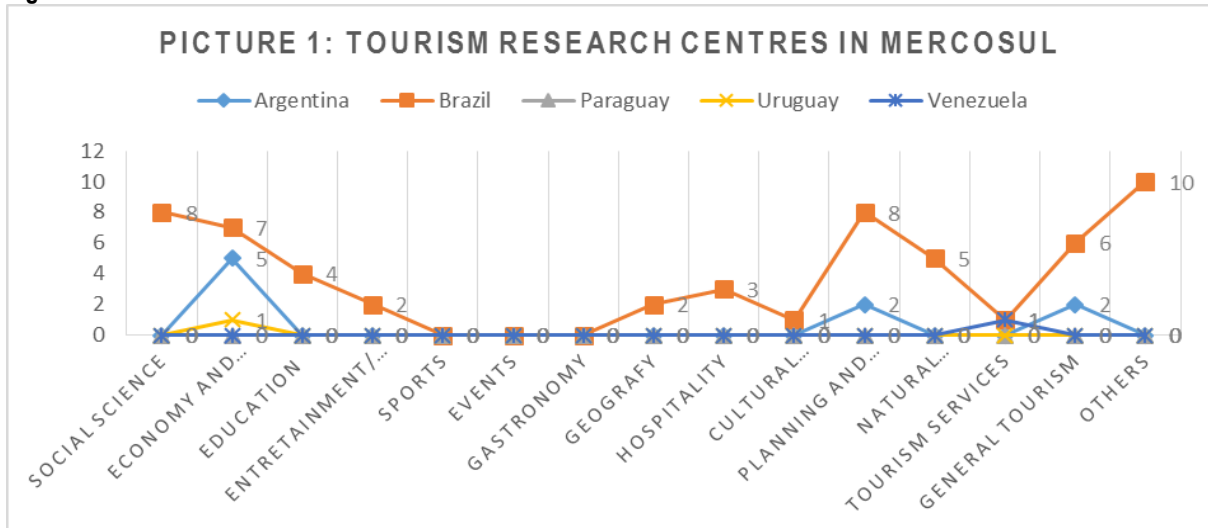
While in the other Mercosul countries there is a homogeneity in terms of the RTC performance focus, whose highlight concentrates in "economics and management" and "travel planning", in Brazil there is more diversification of Research Centres, which include relation to social sciences and tourism services.

Despite identifying and classifying research centres, starting from the information available in each of the electronic sites of universities, it was not found the mention of another TRC in any of the sites. The lack of current information about the scientific production of TRC and the formal indication of relationships with other TRC, suggests a primary stage of development and local or regional action without international connections.

The existence of such joints, therefore, represents an even stage of informal, ad hoc and sporadic connections. Such inter-relations at the international level would leverage an exchange of

knowledge produced in these TRC, as well as its ability to intervene in reality, supposedly, in a more strengthening stage of tourism development in Mercosul.

Figure 1: Tourism Research Centres in Mercosul.



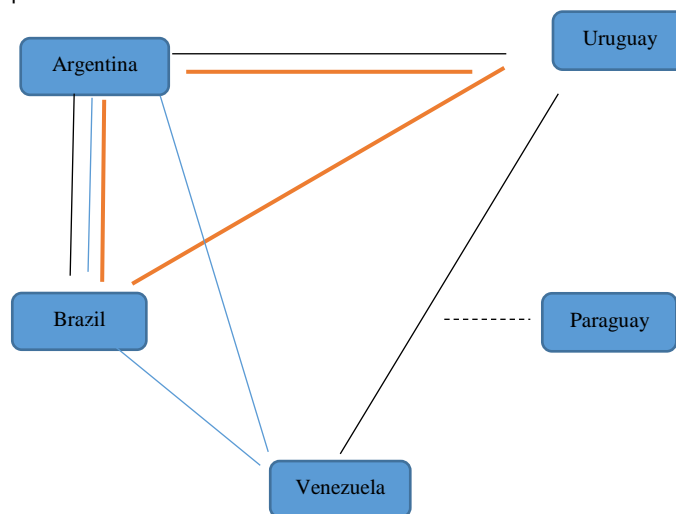
Source: Elaborated from the survey data.

It is suggested some the possible interactions for the exchange of information and knowledge among the Mercosul countries: 1) between

Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela, within 7 RTC, the comprehensive tourism area (blue line); 2) between Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, within 4 RTC, in the area of economics and management (orange line). Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Venezuela could form a network of RTC. Paraguay could setup a RTC (Figure 2).

Thus, the knowledge produced in the block could facilitate and accelerate the research carried out, and therefore the proposition of intervention models for the development of tourism. Such elements seem to be initial to deal with obstacles of alignment between them. This would allow countries of the same region, with common goals, to produce specific knowledge of their interests towards the goal of developing tourism.

Figure 2: proposal of a model of interaction between the RTC of the Mercosur countries.



Source: Elaborated from the survey data.

5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In an attempt to incorporate tourism as a motivating activity for economic and social development in Mercosul States, in this research it was aimed to map the existing of RTCs and to identify if there were interactions among them.

As a result, it is highlighted the asymmetrical distribution of RTC between countries, with nonspecific emphasis and no relation to each other. The emphasis of these research centres is also diverse, hindering the same line of study among them.

There were little partnerships with other universities, but with other countries apart from the Mercosul sphere, such as Spain. In this regard the institutionalization stage of knowledge production in tourism, as a precondition of its development, is still incipient.

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