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The Fragmentation and Knowledge in Tourism Fields: An Alternative Viewpoint

Maximiliano EK*

International Society for Philosophers, Sheffield, United Kindom

Abstract

The production of knowledge in tourism research has reached a point of maturity over last decades, but serious concerns around its future have arisen. An ever-rising number of scholars believe that the current state of fragmentation not only prevents the formation of a shared-epistemology, but leads to a much broader misunderstanding. This essay review does not represent an attack to any scholar in particular, but a criticism that helps thinking in a new alternative fresh view of tourism-led research. As positivism, researchers are prone to use quantitative methods in their respective fieldwork, precluding that people's voice exhibits a source of evidence. The problem is that sometimes interviewees lie or simply are not cognizant of their own behaviour. This is the reason why some other methods are necessary. The lack of a clear epistemology paves the ways for tourism not to be considered a serious academic discipline.

Introduction

Over last years, the current growth of tourism flourished in a wealth of courses, Ph Doctorates, Masters and academic offerings that positioned tourism as a good perspective for students. Jafar Jafari signaled to the term "scientifization of tourism" to explain the ever-increasing attention given to this new field [1-3]. At a first stage, the great volume of bibliographic production offered an encouraging prospect in the pathways towards the maturation of this discipline. However, some epistemologists have recently alerted that not only tourism-research failed to develop an unified consensus of what tourism is, but also lack of a coherent epistemology that helps organizing the produced material. In this respect, tourism is subject now to an atmosphere of "indiscipline" where the produced knowledge leads to scattered (limited) conclusions [4-10].

As the previous backdrop, the present chapter is aimed at discussing critically not only the main methodologies used (qualitative vs. quantitative) by tourism researchers, but also stressing their limitations and problems to arrive to clear diagnosis. This piece, needless to say, reflects my experience as author, reviewer, and of course editor. It does not represent an attack to any particular position in such, but a type of short guide to expand the current understanding on methodologies and tourism. Since each discipline manages its own object of study, one of the preliminary aspects to define, what a tourist is or what does tourism mean? Last but not least, we provide an empirical platform based on three fresh story-lives that may help tourism researchers to arrive clear diagnosis in applied research serving as a guideline to decipher "slippery matters". In earlier studies about risk fields, we have obtained interesting outcomes spending on story life as instruments of collecting information when risk issues. The methods of story life, not only break the vices of the archetype of masculinity, but allowed us to get valid profound outcomes which explain why we feel fear before traveling. Often, as males we have been educated not to accept our emotions, or even disguising risk perception as a criterion of females. Qualitative methodologies amply show risk perception is cross cultural and applies both genres. The structured questionnaires, which are normally applied at stations or airports, are unable to see the complex correlation between risk perception and genre. In terms of Clifford Geertz the first one consists in conducting a "thick description" which is based on observational and conversational talks. More oriented to gather numerous cases instead of deepening on the content of cases, tourism-related research should adopt new fresh qualitative viewpoints. For example, Psychoanalysis was based only in one case, which was worked by Freud with excellence and mastery. Promptly, this case was extrapolated to another cosmologies and universes that illuminated the world of therapists. What would be S. Freud`s fate if he paid attention to sampling and the large of sample, instead of the quality of their observations?.

To reach genuine outcomes, fieldworkers should remain long time in the observed site. As Raquel Irwin observed, the encounter between tourists and locals (even researchers) is based on an atmosphere of "honey-moon" where each part sees the best of the other. In this phase, ethnographers would not find any representative of what they look. Tourists are often "cool", "funny", and have great ideals as "democracy" and "freedom" that helps improving the life of locals. However, this encounter is far from being real. At time, the fieldworker remain in the site, the "Other" will be negatively portrayed. Its idealized image of "the other" will set the pace to negative stereotypes as "lazy", "conflicting person", "backwardness", even when the fieldwork involves an aboriginal reservoir as "savages". Only once the fieldworker overcomes the "culture shock", which takes much time, he/she would be in conditions to make a real ethnography [11].

Towards a Theory of Tourism

It is unfortunate that tourism-researchers not only have developed a sentiment of admiration for social sciences, but also borrowed their main epistemologies for their own concerns. It resulted in the proliferation of multi-disciplinary approaches which obscures more

than clarifying. To fix this, tourism-related research would embrace a new post-disciplinary outlook [12].

As an object of study, tourism has been examined by diverse social sciences, as anthropology [13], Sociology [14,15], Geographies [16-18], Psychology [19], Politics [20,21], economy [22], mobilities [23,24], history [25] and so forth. Beyond the great divergence of all these studies, two main waves emerged. Both will attempt to respond the following question, though from diverse angles:

Is tourism an productive activity resulted from industrial revolution?, or is it a social institution inherited to sedentary tribes?.

Doubtless American and European perspectives discussed to what extent tourism is a modern phenomenon or an ancient practices other civilizations had before us. In this respect, Jost Krippendorf ignited a much deeper discussion to explain the logic of leisure not only traverses cultures and times, but also it is enrooted in the psychology of our mind. No matter than the time, tourism is not previously determined by the capital as American sociology precludes, but by the needs of "escapement" which is common to many human sedentary organizations. Almost all cultures of the planet have historically built their own practices of leisure. It represents a universal institution. If people work to survive, leisure balances their psychological frustrations to bearable conditions. In this vein, the free-will whereby the decision making process starts, seems to be the stepping stone of tourism. The dichotomy between work/leisure keeps present in his whole studies. In view of that, the discovery should be understood as a sublimated expression of frustration and oppression. The needs of knowing for something different prevail over other emotional drives. This issue, though obvious, is of paramount importance to understand how tourism works. Krippendorf was the first scholars to refer not tourism as a simple activity, anchored in industrial logic, but as a form of consciousness. The acts we commit in our holidays are determined by the previous cultural values of society whereby we are educated. Therefore tourism transcends not only the boundaries of geographies, but also of economies. Tourism seems to be an all-encompassing social institution. Without tourism, society would run serious risk of decline and disintegration [22].

A more radical insight, initiated by Dean Maccannell, but continued by other sociologists as Debord, Chambers, Meethan, Edensor and others, who (like Krippendorf) acknowledged the gravity of tourism to produce an enchanting logic to strengthen the social ties, which are in danger by the advent of modernity. Nonetheless, these perspectives not only leave behind the history of other ancient civilization, but focused on the connection of tourism and industrialism alone. Historians of tourism centered their analysis in Middle Age, a period of European history characterized by a high degree of conflict and low mobility. However, they did not pay heed to other ancient civilization as Assyrians, Romans and even Muslims of Ummayad`s Caliphate who earlier than us developed networks of mobilities that facilitated the exchange of goods and persons. For this school, there was nothing like tourism until the industrial revolution. XIX century accelerated the means of transport creating a paradoxical situation. The workforce witnessed a radical improvement in working hours, wages and mobility system that enhanced their time of leisure and purchasing power. As a result of this, tourism served as an ideological instrument to keep the workers under control. Sooner or latter, their salaries would be returned to the consuming society in order for capital owners to gain more profits. It is safe to confirm that the sociology of tourism received considerable influence of French philosophy and Structuralism. Let explain readers that a diagnosis achieved for what is "modern tourism" are mistakenly projected to others fields. This suggests that an alternative view of tourism is necessary given the limitations and problems of current sociological literature.

One might speculate that the last digital changes have derived in new ways of traveling and connecting with others. Those academicians who follow this current wave of thinking do not conceive tourism as a psychological need, nor a disciplinary mechanism of ideology, but as a fertile ground to understand new ways of human interactions [26]. Germann [27] signals to the creation of a new kind of hospitality where relations are switched off and on from the websites and Tzanelli [28] examines the "cinematic tourists" as the convergence of culture and tourism industry where fiction leads audience towards imagined landscapes. Similarly to Tzanelli, Vannini [28,29] speaks of the Rhythm of travels to differentiate travellers and tourists.

The abundant literature orchestrated to define tourism not only failed in achieving that goal, but produced a big state of fragmentation and schools which unheard the academy [7]. As Graham Dann puts it, an academy which not only developed their methods following business-paradigms, but also in the uphill city. As a corpus of academicians coming from different geographical world, an international academy should represent "authorative voices" from diverse countries, language, and disciplines. It is unfortunate that it does not occur with the International Academy for the Study of Tourism. They not only are business-mongers, more interested in protecting the interests of tourist destination than in understanding tourist behaviour, but are native Anglo-speakers [30,31]. This begs a more than interesting point of discussion, how international is the International Academy for the Study of Tourism?

In next sections, we will explore the concerns and the limitations of John Tribe who is today one of the most authorative voices in the epistemology of tourism. During his career, Tribe has developed a critical look respecting to the Academy of tourism and the ways knowledge has been built.

The Epistemology of Tourism

The philosophical concerns of tourism scholars led to question why tourism has not been consolidated as a serious discipline. In this discussion, John Tribe, who serves as Chief Editor of Annals of Tourism Research, starts from the needs of establishing the basis of a new epistemology of tourism beyond of what it has been already written. As noted in his preface, overtly acknowledges, tourism research has advanced considerably over last decades. Not only in the number of specialized journals but also books and other post-graduate programs. However, this was not accompanied with the solidification of a solid argumentative epistemology. It is not my desire to describe chapter by chapter the book all. On the contrary, it is tempting to say that the book should be read as an all encompassing project. What is more than important to discuss is the state of contemporary research in tourism today. Paragraphasing Giddens, Tribe coins the term "run-away tourism" to signify the uncontrolled liberal forces that situates the industry out of control. Following this argument, tourism research has been monopolized by the advance of managerial disciplines, which it can be added, promote the profit of industry instead of laying the foundation of a durable episteme. Tribe`s main argument may be divided in four relevant points,

- Tourism has gained recognition to produce an important volume of knowledge but it is not enough to be seen as a science.

- The nature of tourism seems still to be not easily to define.

- There are unresolved delineations in the commonalities and differences between tourism and mobility.

- Since tourism, even, has been framed as a naïve activity, tourists normal-wise refuse to be labelled as "tourists", they preferably use to be called as "travellers".

It is clear that problems and concerns by researchers in defining an established academic discipline was subject to empirical problems of validations. Although Tribe's compilation attempts to contribute in the formation of solid definition of tourism and hospitality, it fails in the aspect that did not provide a clear explanation why tourism has not been a serious academic alternative up to date. Though we formally recognize the valuable efforts of Tribe to resolve the epistemological problems of tourism, much of reviews done after the release of the book not only were superficial, but also did not understand the point where the argument goes to.

To fulfil this gap, we do not offer a response to the question why tourism has not reach a point of maturation in the standardized guidelines of science, because it stems from the particular interests of some scholars to give formal recognition to their Marketing-related programs. Rather, we will explain further on the boundaries between classical and postmodern disciplines. The problem is not how the knowledge is produced, but the context where the cosmology of the world evolves. Academic disciplines are formed resulting from the societal order and its respective economy. Instead of interrogating on the failure of Enlightenment as an all encompassing project, Tribe takes much attention to the tourist experience. At a closer look, one might realize the science has evolved into three differentiated stages. The scientific thought is determined by three basic pillars:

The inference of laws; The replicability of the data; The explanation of phenomena.

The sources and processes should be duly documented and the results should be capable of being repeated by another researcher. Lastly, science should, by observation, permit the comprehension and explanation of the variation and connection of the variables of the problem. Thus, all scientific research begins with a question, which is answered by following a method. For a long time, the positivists, not knowing about the contributions of the Viennese School, introduced relativity in the evaluation of results. Thus, science came to be determined not by the method but by the falsability of the results. This suggests an investment in the production of knowledge in which the result comes to be more important than the intervening steps. As a result of this epistemological confusion, many scientists fell into conceptual relativity which has led to great fragmentation. The form of research then gave way to methodological subjectivity, which being linked to the situation and politics facilitate the consolidation of modernity as a general way of life. In this context, it is worth clarifying that all science rests on two forms of generating knowledge. The first is called '1st state' and is characterised by the isolation of those variables which are studied, generally in laboratories, and which seek to learn about the laws which govern the universe. Physics is one of the sciences which operate under the principle of direct observation. The environment, in this type of situation, is totally controlled. The scientist should always conduct experiments in the present in order to draw inferences about the future. However, '2nd state' science is totally different. Under certain conditions, the grade of repeatability cannot be isolated in a determined frame of time and space, and the researcher must 'reconstruct' the causes of the problem from the past. Within this classification are the so-called social sciences, which

include psychology and sociology, among others. As capital expands its influence, breaking down the former notions of time and space with globalisation, knowledge is produced by a great variety of research centres with few links between them. Their results are so dispersed that there is little or no dialogue between the different schools of thought. The most established disciplines accuse newer bodies of knowledge of not being able to infer laws, and this becomes a motive for their rejection. Given the general laws of science, it is of interest to know that historical evolution of science has changed through the years. We may explain our model of 'The three phases of science' as follows:

From antiquity until the end of the middle ages, mankind was interested by questions concerning the connection between people and its cities. His economy was purely a subsistence economy linked to cattle farming and primary agriculture. There was an important link between a man and his territory and lineage, as there was no concept of salaried work as we know it today, or in other words the possibility of a person to choose where, for what wage, and for whom he would work. The disciplines which governed life were philosophy, astrology, medicine and astronomy among others. We term this phase 'the primary production of knowledge'. In the late middle age, we enter into a second phase, which we term 'the secondary production of knowledge' in which the Industrial and Cromwellian Revolutions have left their mark. Work and the relationship of a person with his lineage started to lose their strong linkage, due to the consensus that labour should be sold according to the conditions of the context. Little by little man ceased to be subject to God, his city, and his master in order to become part of the capitalist adventure based on speculation, control of the results, and calculation. During this process, from the 19th century until the middle of the 20th century, new disciplines wee born. These included psychology, anthropology and sociology. These new disciplines were totally orientated to the study of man, but rather than seeking the answers to abstract universal questions, they were specific with emphasis on industrial work, poverty, and development, for instance.

The 'social sciences' entered into conflict with the established disciplines, and so sociology confronted philosophy, and psychology confronted medicine (and psychiatry). Without doubt, we inevitably begin to see a fragmentation in the method of generating and interpreting knowledge. These forms of the production of science cannot be studied outside the context of the standardisation of the modern means of production in general. Systemic standardisation (that is, the possibility of the accumulation of comparative data, as defended by the positivists) was directly proportional to mass production. Society and human behaviour begin to be considered as a systemic whole, where there are inputs, processes and outputs which indefinitely feed back into other systems. Social interaction is the conceptual base which these new sciences claimed to study. Nevertheless, the situation changed radically towards the end of 20th century, or to be more exact in about 1970 when capitalist countries began to realise that they could not guarantee serial production for ever in a sustainable way. This was due to the energy crisis provoked by the Arab-Israeli War, in which industries had to introduce a new form of consumption so that capital, which had been born out of the Industrial Revolution, could become electronic. The production of capital for the purchase of goods did not now seem to be as important as the opposite situation, where goods become a pre-condition for the production and general accumulation of money. The classic relationship is replaced by symbolic mediators, such as money, generating a total solipsism, or the view that the self is the only thing that really exists. We may call this third state the 'fragmented stage of knowledge' in which the new disciplines

(communication, journalism, tourism, gastronomy, management and publicity, for example) begin to gain ground in comparison with second stage disciplines such as sociology. As two of the main characteristics of post-modernity have been social fragmentation and subjectivity, theses new forms of knowledge have been oriented towards consumption and the aesthetic. These new values of society are rejected by the already established second stage sciences. It is tempting to say that sociology and anthropology claim that tourism is a science which does not have its foundations in serious reason. These are the same claims that sociology had confronted from its own predecessors. In order to summarise this model and enable the reader to achieve a greater understanding of the phenomenon, we might synthesise the main aspects which distinguish third stage sciences as follows:

They are disciplines which are linked to the creation of necessities, in order to explain them.

1- They consider social reality as a product.

2- They follow parameters which are similar to market engineering.

3 Their considerations and findings are isolated, and cannot be integrated into a coherent whole.

4- They show great fragmentation or lack an academic base to orientate research.

5- Information plays an important role in the construction of their discourse, but is not integrated.

6- They appeal to multi-disciplinarity but their results are mere second-order explanations.

7- They are purely descriptive.

8- They are strongly influenced by the aesthetic and appearance.

9- They focus on experience as their principal strength, but lack an integrated

In other terms, as they define as an abstract form of thinking, these new disciplines can express principles, which do not have any real direction. These new post industrial sciences are incomplete projects, which are aimed at explaining what must be done, instead of focusing in the fact. They are centered on studding effects, not reasons.

Quantitative Methodologies vs. Qualitative Methodologies

In the preface of their book, *Tourism Research Methods,* Ritchie et al. [32] noted tourism research was caught between two fronts, business vs. social science-led methodologies. The programs at main European and American Universities are hosted in managerial business faculties or in social science division according to the discretion of the establishment. Even those textbooks written by sociologists or anthropologists, in tourism research, are not based on empirical cases or study cases given by tourism fields. Far from asking for the unification of syllabuses authors highlighted on the needs of integrating theory with practice.

The tension, which is described above, pits industry-based researchers against social scientists. During decades, sociology was reluctance to accept tourism as a serious discipline. This happens because sociologists express their worry knowledge-production has increased to the extent to be bogged down. The attempts to expand the research volume resulted in a disordered expansion that today is very hard to grasp. Moreover, much of the influence of positivism as well

as economic functionalism has undermined the objectivity of current business studies. Last but not least, the conceptual fragmentation given the lack of a coherent epistemology has led to take exorbitant attention to the role played by taxonomies in the fieldwork. In consequences, the current applied research, which is overtly published in top tier journals, focuses its studies on the tourist-experience alone [33].

To what an extent research outcomes are derived from tourism-methodologies is a point discussed by Chris Ryan. Based on the concept of experience in Plato, Ryan adheres to fieldwork sometimes is subject to a great variety of sources, where the experience of tourists is the primary criterion of truth [34]. The discussion leaves one lesson, we need to find and combine new sources of investigation, to escape to the established pro-positivism stereotypes. As this argument given, one might not to lose the sight that a much profound discussion on the qualitative and quantitative arguments has been edited by Dwyer et al. [35]. In this respect, the advance of quantitative methods monopolized the conception of business-related journals, while qualitative instrument are used by sociology and anthropology. However, both techniques have their benefits and limitations. At a first glance, by measuring a sample one may obtain correlation between two or more variables, but nobody knows if this link explains the issue. To set an example, the findings of research may show that females are frightful to some risks as terrorism, natural disasters and food contamination, while males are not prone to risk perception. In view of this information, the report concludes that females are risk prone in comparison to males. Even, readers may validate these remarks according to the used methodologies and the steps in designating the sample. From a qualitative view, this rests in a great fallacy because of two main reasons. The first and most important, risks are social construes, which do not depend on the genre by the previous cognitive filter where each genre is educated. Women would perceive more risk because she is being socialized to express their concerns, and fears. Besides, she takes a proactive role in caring their families. Rather, men not only repress their emotions because it undermines their archetype of masculinity, but are educated to sublimate their fears in violence. Secondly, perception of risk may not provide any time of shock in the psychological mind. Even, some tourists are strongly interested to be in risky destinations while others are risk-avoiders.

Although qualitative-driven research offers a lot of alternatives in tourism fields, less attention is given by the lack of training in students once their PhD or degrees are earned. Some of vices and limitations senior researchers in their respective investigations stems from the apprenticeship when they were students. Next, we will discuss the most important problems of methodology courses. At a first glance, many of the investigations conducted by Senior lecturers recruit students to collate information in the fieldwork. Why a student cannot be fieldworker?, is its lack of experience a serious obstacle to overcome?

In perspective, the employment of student for professional investigations exhibits two main problems. Firstly, students are not familiar with the design of research as well as the conceptual discussion senior researchers had with its colleagues, which means that young fieldworkers administer questionnaires and interviews as automats. Not only they ignore those expressions which would be of importance to keep in mind, but also, a lot of details are missing between interviewee and interviewer. Secondly, students want to sympathize with their tutors; this leads not only by obscuring the outcome of fieldwork (to get good marks) but are prone to make the much they can. Indeed, these amateur researchers think erroneously that the large of the sample gains veracity in the hypothesis they want to test. No

matter what interviewees respond, they look for obtaining the largest number of cases.

Particularly, there are qualitative approaches as (self) ethnography, story life, participant observation, projective drawings which are not based in the number of case but in the deepness of content. Most of these techniques are successfully achieved after a long period of time to warm up with participants. Even, in the fieldwork anthropologists never interview the entire community they only take one key informant who is considered as a valid source to understand the habits and customs of the rest. During the fieldwork, the key informant would be of help not only in assisting the ethnographer, but also in weaving the network of politics, economics proper of the studied society. What these types of methodologies valorize seems to be the meaning instead of measuring. Then, the logic of multi-variable comparison, where rests many of quantitative techniques, has no sense in ethnography. An excellent ethnology may be achieved with only one case. As Clifford Geertz puts it, a person may wink the eye to others, but this act, may have two diverse interpretations. It can be a nervous habit or an insinuation of any type. Metaphorically speaking this is exactly what happens with qualitative methods [36]. Examples of good ethnographies or projective drawing application can be seen in the following investigations: The Tourist [37], The Power of Projective Drawings, Envisioning Eden [38], Traversing Paris [39] and others. An additional obstacle relates to the divergence between what peoples say and do. I do remember my ethnography in the "Sanctuary of Cromañón", a dark-tourism site where 194 teenagers died while attending a rock and rock festival. One day, a person came to me explaining me he was a privilege eye-witness of everything what happened that sad night. In respect to this, the interview lasted roughly 5 hours and was tape-recorded. The information I obtained from this young was very important for me at a preliminary stage. Nonetheless, with the passing of months I have advanced my ethnography comparing the collated information by what I can hear and see. Not only I realized that the original interview was completely false, because the involved key-informant wanted to attract attention and exaggerated his stories, but he felt the needs to tell something to me. The importance of this story was not determined by its credibility. He had not lost anyone in the disaster of Cromañon, though developed a strange attachment for the event, for the other´s suffering. This empathy led him to alter his sense of reality. Paradoxically, although this interview was a fake, it underpinned the main hypotheses in my research opening the doors to new cosmologies and opportunities to be empirically validated. This reflects two important lessons, sometimes people imagine events which are unreal but it speaks of their inner world. In addition sometimes interviewees lie or are unfamiliar with the reasons behind their behaviour. Whenever quantitative-techniques are applied in this slippery context, results are contrasting and confusing.

Nonetheless, qualitative view has received a sharp criticism by some epistemologists because the outcomes of investigation cannot be replicated in a standardized way. Historians of anthropology have acknowledged two ethnographers visit the same community observing diverse aspects of life, or even contrasting evidence. Whatever the case many, quantitative methodologies does not offer much support respecting to the divergence the method generates. To put this in bluntly, a careful sampling of 1,500 cases shows that 70% of participants are risk-avoiders while 30% restant are risk-seekers. Though this percentage does correlate with demographic variables as genre, age or even profession, it does not explain the roots of the phenomena. The only thing we know is that in the sample, there is a trend marked by the 70% that are characterized as risk-avoiders. However, the paradox lies in the fact at time of confirming 70% of sample is in one direction,

a 30% does not confirm the law. Then, to what an extent our outcomes are representative of the whole universe?.

The quantitative methods should be used to express trends, but they often fail to explain reasons. To solve this pitfall, some epistemologists suggest "triangulation" as a valid source to combine the best of quantitative with qualitative methods. In the following lines we will discuss three cases of phobia and its connection to an early trauma. The specialized literature in tourism never studied a case like this, because of the above marked methodological errors.

Conclusion

The essay review discusses not only in the importance of qualitative methods to understand certain type of issues, otherwise would remain covered but also provides good alternatives to overcome the flaws of current applied research. Imagine for a moment we have to conduct a censorship asking for the type of Job to a prostitute or a member of mafia. The former will respond she works as a secretary, while the latter is a businessman. This example explains very well the limitations of structured-obtrusive methodologies to make certain type of field-works. It is unfortunate that tourism-related research is today torn between old prejudice of positivism, and the nihilist beliefs of self-constructivism; in both cases, it failed to construct a clear and coherent conceptual platform towards the consolidation of a shared epistemology. This chapter served to uncover many of the vices and problems senior researchers had at time of entering in the field. Once again, this does not exhibit an attack to a certain scholar but a reminder that scientific research can be separated from "oughtness". The principle of objectivity leads researchers to be neutral respecting to what is good or bad, taking their attention only to what they observe. Unfortunately, whole tourism research seems to be prepared to play the role of marketing studies, enhancing businesses and profits, or seeing what can be improved in the future. Unless, scholars and their academy abandon this "pro-business" platform, tourism-research is far from being a serious discipline.

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