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THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL TO INCREASE THE COMPETITIVENESS  
OF THE BELARUS ECONOMY REFORMING\*

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НА ПОВЫШЕНИЕ КОНКУРЕНТОСПОСОБНОСТИ  
РЕФОРМИРУЕМОЙ БЕЛОРУССКОЙ ЭКОНОМИКИ

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## Аннотация

*В статье рассматриваются сущность и социально-экономическая взаимозависимость механизмов экономической конкурентоспособности и социального капитала в Беларуси и докризисной Украине. Предложены пути повышения эффективности использования социального капитала в Республике Беларусь в целях обеспечения устойчивого экономического роста, в том числе: обеспечения устойчивого распределения социального капитала в стране для различных социальных горизонтов; совершенствование и развитие партнерских бизнес отношений «общество-государство».*

*Ключевые слова: занятость, научное общество, модернизация, социальный капитал, инновационное развитие, экономический рост, конкурентоспособность, экономическая конкурентоспособность.*

## Abstract

*The essence and the socio-economic interdependence of the mechanisms of economic competitiveness and social capital of Belarus and pre-crisis Ukraine. It is possible to propose ways to improve the use of existing social capital in the Republic of Belarus to ensure sustainable economic growth, including: ensuring steady distribution of social capital in the country for various social horizons; improvement and development of business partnerships «society-state».*

*Key words: employment, scientific community, modernization, social capital, innovative development, economic growth, competitiveness, economic competitiveness.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the world has undergone radical social and technological changes, radically transformed the nature of the market and market relations. Economically developed countries have moved to a new post-industrial society. There are a faster pace growing importance of social and human economic resources. This science work should contribute to the further advancement of economic theory and methodology of the study due to the general and particular in the interdependence of economic competitiveness and social capital of Belarus, for comparison we take pre-crisis Ukraine. It is assumed, that this will contribute to further understanding the political economy of social and economic efficiency of strategies of economic development of our countries.

## RESULTS AND ITS DISCUSSION

General and special mechanisms of increasing of social capital in Ukraine and Belarus

The modern economy is no longer a market economy in its understanding of the market in the first half of the twentieth century. Understanding this in the foreign economic science was reflected in the emergence of a large number of concepts, applying for a systematic description of modern high-technology society, which has led to the emergence of concepts such as «post-industrial society», «information society», «knowledge society», «technotronic society», «network society», «environmental post-industrialism», etc. In our view feature of the new stage of development of economic relations is a radical change in the mechanisms of the exchange between producers and consumers. The market segment, ruled in economically developed countries for a long time, becomes peripheral. The post-market economy is characterized by a highly efficient industrial production, a significant increase in the share of services in GDP, further increasing the value of knowledge for economic development, development of the Internet technologies and new (post-market) form of competition.

J Baudrillard remarked that for the further progress of modern political economy in particular, and the economic science in general is necessary that «the analysis of the social function of distinguishing objects and analysis of the political function of ideology, which is associated with it» [1, c.9], came «from one of the absolute prerequisites: the abolition of itself - evident consideration of items in terms of the needs, the abolition of the primacy of the hypothesis of use-value» [1, c.9]. Sign exchange value is fundamental, so that the use value often is simply its practical application (or even a simple rationalization): Only in such a paradoxical form sociological hypothesis is true. Under this approach, the most important function of the exchange of goods and objects becomes institutionalized social hierarchy.

At the time, Veblen showed that even if the original function of the subordinate classes was production, their, at the same time, function still as the approval status of the master. Moreover, in a situation where subordinate classes are in idle, this function becomes unique [2].

The most important is the «mismatch between implied mobility (aspirations) and real mobility (objective chances of social advancement)» [1, p. 21]. As noted on this occasion J. Baudrillard, «these aspirations (implies mobility) are not free <...> they depend on social heredity and on the provisions already made. Having reached a certain threshold of mobility, they disappear - is absolute obedience. In general, they are relatively unrealistic: we look forward to more than we able to achieve, and at the same time, the relatively realistic: we are not giving our overly ambitious imagination to run wild» [1, p. 21].

From this perspective, the implied mobility (aspirations) and real mobility (objective chances of social advancement) the difference between Belarus and Ukraine are very important, which objectively affects the mechanisms for the increasing of social capital and forms of its capitalization at the level of society and at the level of other aggregated social subjects. Previously, we have already established that the specific feature of social capital is

that the total number of «social capital» in a society is not the sum of «social capital» of all its subjects. This is not only because there are some manifestations of social capital only at the level of the whole society, but also because this capital socio-economic actors can be used not only in the productive purposes, and also to optimize its socio-economic vitality. For the economic evaluation can be used Kaldor-Hicks criterion. In modern society, there can be observed both cooperation and struggle between social classes. The higher the class antagonism, the more classes use their social capital not for the productive purposes and compromise, but for the class struggle. In the first case (in many ways typical of the Belarusian society) there are mechanisms to facilitate capacity increasing at the social level of society, that allows the process of capitalization successfully solve the problem of sustainable economic growth and overcome economic difficulties. A different picture in Ukraine, where any economic problems lead to social explosions and economic collapse, and a frequent change of the ruling elites contributes to incessant redistribution of property (often in a latent form), and reduce the level of economic development. Low degree of social stratification in the Republic of Belarus and the successful use of social capital, accumulated at the level of society, contribute to ensuring a high level of real incomes.

To disassemble the society, i.e. for the destruction of the cooperation between entities belonging to it, foreign manipulators of public consciousness today is often used implicit contradiction between mobility (aspirations) and real mobility. Under the information weapon today is meant non-lethal means of conducting a modern war (without the physical destruction of the enemy). It provides identification and defeat the enemy using information concentrators of different designs, allows to influence the social subject, leading to a blockage of his social activities, can effectively redistribute material resources without damage to the property itself. In the practical application of information weapons creates some virtual (ideal) structure, perceived by people as real. As a result, disoriented part of the population starts to act not in order to realize their interests, and in the direction indicated by their subject, who was able to apply successfully the information weapon against them. In our case, as a virtual (ideal) structure acts implied mobility. People are taught that it is the government of the country prevents the fact that this perfect image quickly became real. And here it does not matter that the contradiction between the implied mobility (aspirations) and real mobility - a phenomenon common to all the social and economic systems. For manipulators it is important that there were a few social capital accumulated at the community level, then it is easier to get people to destroy its economic system, thus increasing the competitive advantages of the country manipulator. Since Belarus is already has much higher accumulated social capital at the community level, our country can use its (capital) for the productive purposes. In Ukraine, as the level of social capital at the community level is low, the government, society and businesses have to incur significant costs in the economy and the fight against «Euro-Maidan», i.e. to counteract the actual transformation of Ukraine into a colony of the European Union. This suggests that the mechanisms social capital increasing in the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine are fundamentally different.

The formed rejection of the liberal-market path of socio-economic and political development, in which the country has gone in the early 90s, ensured the election of the first President of the Republic of Belarus AG Lukashenko, which determined the change of social and economic policy of the country. The new economic strategy of Belarus, started with the arrival of AG Lukashenko, was the development of a socially oriented model of market economy, where the state is committed to providing all its citizens certain basic social and economic guarantees. The way of development ensured the steady growth of the Belarusian economy, improving its structure, increasing the incomes of the majority of the population, the increase of social capital at the level of society and other aggregated social subjects.

The other post-Soviet situation was in Ukraine, which was not able to get out of the stage of the redistribution of property in which the wholesale privatization led to de-

industrialization of the country. The failure of the liberal-market experiments with ownership of agricultural land complete the picture of the collapse of agro-industrial complex and the impoverishment of the peasantry. Massively disappointed in the Ukrainian market reforms have failed to rally around national leader, who could realize their socio-economic class interests. There wasn't such leader in Ukraine. As a result, the increase of social capital in the country is at the level of classes, economic entities, small ethnic groups, individual small settlements, etc. Named entities use their accumulated social potential only in their private and group interests, strengthening these class antagonisms and preventing the accumulation of social capital at the community level. As a result, the Ukrainian economy is not efficient, and the population quickly disillusion with their politicians.

The mismatch between the implied and actual mobility is based on the «implicit social actors objective interpretation of sociological data: industrial societies provide certain categories of the population average chance of promotion, but the chances are relatively small; social trajectory, except for certain cases, is rather short, social inertia is quite palpable, there is always an opportunity for regress» [1, p. 21–22.]. Baudrillard J. wrote that, in this case, «it seems that: the motivation to climb the social ladder expresses the internalization of common norms and patterns of society continued growth; the excess of aspirations in relation to the real possibilities of imbalance issues, a profound contradiction of society in which «democratic» ideology of social progress in the case intervenes to compensate for the relatively inert and override social mechanisms» [1, p. 22]. The result is a «contradiction between sound economic logic and cultural class logic» [1, p. 34].

Jean Baudrillard made very important statement on the European values and the project «United Europe», «the main purpose of the scheme of international stratification, passing under the symbol of «Europe», is the political implementation of national integration, peculiar to each of the countries in this question, and it is carried out not only by the consummation, but also by the stratification» [1, p. 47]. With this project, allowing to reduce the accumulation of social capital and the level of consciousness of the lower classes «in a statistical dichotomy – says Jean Baudrillard – there are the old diversity opposing classes removed: they are still two, but between them there is no more conflict - the two terms are changed to the two poles of «social dynamics». The consequence (and purpose) of the tactical division is to neutralize the extreme elements and, therefore, any controversy that might arise from them socially: there is only one model level, and - all the rest. Mixed by the statistics, they are presented as a population, the vast middle class or those who they can become, a class, which already culturally prepared for the luxuries of the privileged classes. There is no longer the radical inequality between the head of the company and employees at the lower levels, as the latter, mixed with the middle class by statistics, sees that it has entrusted to the «average» class and has promised to the upper classes. Throughout no one is subjected to the ultimate elimination the social ladder [1, p. 47–48]. In Old Europe, as noted by Jean Baudrillard: «Around the possession of cultural and material goods there were organized a whole new concept of class strategy. Values and criteria for consumption are subjected to the imaginary universalization only to tie successfully «irresponsible» classes to consumption and, thereby, save the exclusivity of governing classes power» [1, p. 49]. This technique creates the illusion of uniting all class of the «democratic» Europe.

Moreover, this product of manipulating the mass consciousness (project «United Europe»), dismantling of social actors, and thus, forcing the latter to take action is not responsible to their personal or group or public social and class interests, is widely used by European ruling classes to export their public functional technology. Named exports today allows the EU to receive significant economic dividends not only in Europe, but around the world. The main characteristic of these social and functional innovations is that they are primarily aimed at reducing the social capital at the community level. And here between Belarus and Ukraine found a big difference. The Republic of Belarus has considerable social potential at the com-

munity level, which has successfully capitalized (arising from this transaction costs are sometimes large enough, they can and should be minimized, but it is not a subject of this study), which allows to resist successfully the application against our country information weapons. Ukrainian social capital at the community level is very low and, therefore, the use of the information weapons harms the Ukrainian society, and causes significant damage to the economy. These traditional mechanisms of accumulation at the community level and social potential of its capitalization barely functional.

The principles and mechanisms of the influence of the Belarus and Ukraine economic competitiveness on the process of accumulation of social capital.

If the fact of having close links between the concepts of economic competitiveness and social capital of the country for most researchers is fairly obvious, then the very principles and mechanisms, of the effect of the economic competitiveness of a country in the process of accumulation of social capital, studied today to a much lesser extent. This is determines the need to formulate conceptual approaches to the identification and description of these principles and mechanisms. In our opinion, today there are two basic conceptual approaches when considering the above-mentioned concepts and phenomena.

The first conceptual approach: there is the need to take into account the basic principles and mechanisms to improve the competitiveness of a country in the process of identifying more specific principles and mechanisms of the increasing of the competitiveness of the country on the growth of its social capital. In particular, one of the basic principles of improving the economic competitiveness of the country must include the following theoretical constructs: 1) the principle of free competition; 2) the principle of efficient use of existing competitive advantages (resources); 3) the principle of creating an enabling institutional environment for economic development, and others. At the same time, as a rule, each such principle is implemented in the economic practice through the use of a specific mechanism to improve the country's competitiveness.

The basis of the second conceptual approach is the understanding of the fact that not of all of the basic principles and mechanisms, to improve the economic competitiveness of the country actually, promote the growth of social capital. For example, the principle of free competition is implemented through the mechanism of the maximum liberalization of the economy and reduction to a minimum the role of the state in the economic life of the country. As international experience shows, the use of that principle as a basic principle of increasing the economic competitiveness of the country's, is not conducive to the growth of social capital of the country, as a tough competition relations of economic entities ("war of all against all") inhibit the establishment of the integration of economic relations in society (except the connections appeared in the process of economic and commercial mergers and acquisitions, as well as corporate structures in the formation of strategic alliances and etc.). In addition, minimization of the functions of the state in the economy negatively affects the development of social sphere of the country. Private companies and transnational corporations develop, at best, only their own corporate social sphere.

Due the macroeconomic indicators of the national economic development of a country, the effectiveness of the impact of specific principles and mechanisms to improve the competitiveness of the country on the growth of its social capital may vary widely. For example, the presence of the developed science in the country contributes to the growth of interdependence of its competitiveness and social equity only if the economy of the country formed the following conditions: a) large high-tech companies; b) development of the national innovation system; c) a high level of demand of the national economy of the latest scientific advances.

To identify similarities and differences of the principles and mechanisms to increase the competitiveness of their economies in Ukraine and Belarus, we consider the practice of using the basic principles and mechanisms to improve the economic competitiveness by the named countries. The analysis of the features of the principle of free competition and a mech-

anism has shown that the use of this principle and the related mechanism for the implementation is quite different in Belarus and Ukraine. For example, in Belarus some researchers refer «the formation of competitive relations, the establishment of transparent, consistent with international standards rules of business» [3 p. 56] to the prospective areas of institutional policy of our state.

Moreover, in his monograph, LA Gutsalenko theoretically justified the nature of competition: «Freedom and competition - synonymous concepts, overflow into each other... social freedom cannot be limited by only one area of human activity. If there was no social freedom in the economic activities (undivided monopoly of state property under authoritarianism), it could not have been in the field of political relations and further - science, art, morality, and religion. In turn, its presence in these areas implies freedom of intellectual, controversial expression rights, including the right to take risks and the willingness of the person to be responsible for the free choice of non-standard and innovative alternatives to the action in front of other people, the law society. This is real, not declared freedom: guarantee of the selection of targets, mode of action and dispose of the reached wealth. Thus, the role of freedom forming competition is in the guarantee of the possibility of public entities and social groups to define themselves freely in the media, ways of working, on an alternative basis to share its results» [4, p. 23].

In Belarus in recent years, «integration paradigm of economic theory and practice comes to replace the market-competitive doctrine of confidence» [5, p. 55]. In fact, it does not mean a complete renunciation of the implementation of the principle of free competition. Among the Belarusian economists there is an increasingly spreading understanding of the fact that «today only a highly integrated, and thus actively managed with «visible hand» of the state, unified economic complex can be globally competitive in the face of the mighty Western super corporations» [6, p. 7]. So the maximum integration and unification of all Belarusian producers in a unified state corporation «Belarus» could enhance global competitiveness in foreign markets, of as the Belarusian economy as a whole and its individual businesses.

There is a somewhat different embodiment of this principle and the mechanism for its application in the national economic practice observed in the Ukrainian economy. All the shortcomings tough competitive liberal «war of all against all», which appeared in the economic practice of the Ukraine in the early 1990s, were retained. Ukrainian management has exacerbated the deficiencies with a state protection of monopolistic, oligarchic structures. Similar statements about the state protection could also be found among Russian economists: «Unfortunately, there is no desired kind of interest in the PPE (public-private enterprise) in Russian business today. The main instrument of competition for them is not the technological and organizational modernization progress, but the protection of the holders of certain state employee» [7, p. 18].

Thus, unnatural to a normal market economy, combination of the ultimate «atomization» of economic actors on the lower level of competitive economic struggle, against the outspoken government, with the lobbying oligarchic structures on the upper level of such competition, has led to the complete disintegration of the national economic complex of the country. Disintegration is most clearly manifested in the complete mismatch of existing production structures in Ukraine and those research organizations, which provide scientific support for the activities of production structures: «A paradoxical situation: research (especially scientific and technical) institutions is slowly» dying «due to lack of demand for their products form manufacturers, while the manufacturers were discontinued their activity due to lack of new ideas and developments for the production of competitive products. The authority was unable to coordinate their activities, to build a competent scientific-technical and innovation policy at both central and regional levels [8, p. 3].

The result, of this kind independent realization of the principle of free competition in the economic practice of Ukraine, was a further decrease in the value of social capital in

different sectors of the Ukrainian economy. The Ukrainian economist A Popovic marked «the fact that the research intensity of the GDP in this country for the past 20 years shows a steady trend of incidence, whether GDP is falling or rising, could serve as a persuasive proof that the social capital of Russian science is not only growing, but even falling» [9, p. 6].

The practical implementation of the principle of efficient use of available data of the competitive advantages (resources) received a different content in Belarus and Ukraine. Belarus due to her lack of more or less significant natural resources (except for deposits of potash) opted for the formation and use of such a specific economic resource as innovation. In most cases, it is a socio-technological, rather than technical and technological innovation. Belarusian researcher D Rutka justifies the choice of Belarus as follows: «In the current conditions the competitiveness of goods, companies and countries are increasingly determined by the ability of the national economy to generate and implement new technologies. Innovations are a factor that can significantly influence the development of national competitiveness. Therefore, when analyzing the most competitive countries is noteworthy the fact that the leaders on this indicator are both leaders in the field of technology. The share of innovations in the overall index of competitiveness is from 1/3 to 1/2. At the same time as they reach a higher stage of development of innovative growing the innovation gain the share in the maintenance of competitiveness» [10, p. 65]. In favor of the correctness of the Belarus leadership choice of innovative development of national economy testify to statements by leading Western economists: «There is no longer necessity of the question «Do we need innovation or not?» in the Wes. Since the answer is too obvious: without innovation and continuous development, any, even very successful today, company will remain behind the competition tomorrow» [11, p. 12].

At the same time, Belarus defined with not only a key resource to increase their economic competitiveness (innovation), but also to the mechanism of formation and use of a particular resource. As mentioned by the Belarusian economists T Ambrusevich and V Kudashov, today governments and the vast majority of economic entities of Belarus are well «know and mechanism for ensuring competitiveness - is to create favorable conditions for an innovation activity» [12, p. 41]. To this end, our country has already implemented the second State program of innovative development of Belarus for 2011–2015. (SPID 2011–2015). The first such program (SPID 2006–2010) was implemented in 2006–2010.

The government of the Republic of Belarus rather consistently generates favorable conditions for active innovation of domestic enterprises [13, p. 212]. In favor of this conclusion could also be given other arguments: 1) from year to year, the number of subjects of innovative infrastructure of the Belarusian economy (industrial parks, business incubators, technology clusters, centers of technology transfer, spin-off enterprises, start-ups, etc.) is rising. Currently, the number of such entities has exceeded a hundred names [14, p. 114]; 2) Hi-Tech Park created in Belarus is developing rapidly (for 2006-2012 its foreign trade turnover exceeded \$ 1 billion) [15, p. 56]. The latter was made possible by an unprecedented tax benefits that High Technology Park has received from the Belarusian state, «High-Tech Park has a special legal regime and favorable economic conditions. Its residents are exempt from income tax, the value added in the domestic market and real estate. There are preferences and the calculation of the income tax on individuals» [15, p. 55].

The data on the investment costs of the Republic of Belarus [13, p. 212] on the implementation of innovative programs and projects, the formation of an innovative infrastructure and preferential tax treatment of individual subjects of such infrastructure give a basis to conclude that the leadership of our state takes into account experience in Europe, India and China on this issue, while the development of its strategy of modernization and innovation policy.

In contrast to the Soviet society, in which the presence of a larger social capital provided its owners with greater access to public and consumer goods, in a developed market economy, the accumulated public social capital performs integrative function, making this type of economy the economic features of a unified corporation: «The market could be considered as a

separate corporation traders, each of which has a social capital, the value of which is determined by the amount of the relationships in the market» [16, p. 125]. Moreover, «a sufficient stock of social capital may partially substitute for the state in the core of powers of the latter - the provision of public goods, taking the responsibility for the maintenance of infrastructure, maintenance of public order and so on. Social capital makes possible the self-regulation of the economy and allows to reduce government regulation. In the same way corporate social responsibility reduces the need for participation of the state in protecting the environment, labor relations, product quality control, and so on» [17, p. 51–52]. Thus, the relationship between social capital and economic competitiveness of the country in the development of socially oriented market economy is very significant, contributing to the formation of civil society (public self-organization), which takes control of the actions of public officials.

## CONCLUSIONS

The information above allows to make a conclusion, that in the Ukraine the priority of the traditional raw material economy in which the dominant role played by the oligarchic structure, not by a «new social and economic space», the most negatively impact on the value of the social capital of the country. In this respect, Ukrainian economist IA Bulkin made conclusion: «The volume of innovative expenditures per capita in Belarus is much (in 3,07–5,64 times) exceeds the Ukrainian values. The centralized economy was adequate to the task of innovative development, rather than market-oligarchic. Noteworthy is not only the scale of the excess - in times (which compensates for errors of observation, which typically have a smaller dimension), but also the fact that the excess occurred in the entire observation interval. Most importantly - the proportion continued in the global financial crisis. Thus, without denying the thesis of the susceptibility level of innovation activity in Belarus for foreign economic negativity, we argue that the policy of Ukraine stabilization failed at least. In addition, the maximum ratio of the specific countries in R & D expenditures amounted to 1,983 in favor of Belarus. Of course, not all of the innovations are based on the achievements of science and technology, and not the entire front of scientific research has a production line, but the comparison is indirect evidence in favor of the higher efficiency of the implementation of scientific and technological results in the industry in Belarus than in Ukraine» [18, p. 223–224].

The principle of efficient use of existing Belarus and Ukraine's competitive advantages (resources) is closely related to the principle of creating an enabling institutional environment for economic development of these countries. Practical implementation of this principle in the economic practice of Belarus and Ukraine too much different. Belarus earlier, than in Ukraine, understood and began to use in the economic benefits the practice of «soft» factors to increase the country's competitiveness. Although, the priority in the use of such factors belongs to the most developed Western countries: «According to specialists of the expert corporation «World Economic Forum» in 1992, the competitive advantages of the country advanced economies were only 15% dependent on the traditional («hard») indicators, such as GDP, inflation, trade balance. In 85% of the international position of the country depends on the «soft» factors of competitiveness. These include the motivation of labor, level of education and skills development, development of the system of values in production» [19, p. 6].

However, the Belarusian authorities in time realized the benefits of such «soft» factors to increase the economic competitiveness of the country and began to increase the capacity of these factors in the domestic economy:

- 1) increase the motivation of labor in domestic enterprises;
- 2) increase the level of education of the Belarusian population;
- 3) form a system of values in the workplace.

The comparative data [20, p. 153, 169, 171; 21; 4, p. 99] on the development of «soft» factors in increasing the competitiveness of Belarus and Ukraine (collectively, these «soft»



factors can be called the human capital), give a reason to LA Gutsalenko, the author of the monograph «The Sociology of competition» (2007), to make the following conclusion: «If you take the overall indicators of the share of human capital in national wealth, in this respect, Belarus seems preferable to other CIS countries. Here its share reached 55.4%, while in Ukraine - 53.1%, Russia - 50.9%. Therefore, we can say that with the one of the main factor in the possibility of improving the competitiveness of Belarus, we are not worse, and even slightly better than our neighbors». It should be recalled, that, in comparison with 2007, when quoted monograph was written, the share of human capital in the structure of the national wealth of Ukraine decreased significantly in the result of the ongoing civil war in a number of regions. The migration of highly skilled personnel abroad, including from those regions, which formally is not involved in armed confrontation, has increased.

Thus, it is obvious today that the practical implementation of the basic principles and mechanisms to improve the economic competitiveness of Ukraine and Belarus has a direct impact on the dynamics of social capital. In Ukraine, the implementation of these principles and mechanisms leads to a decrease in the value of social capital. While in Belarus, on the contrary, it leads to an increase in social capital, due to the fundamental difference between the chosen by these countries macroeconomic business models: the liberal-oligarchic model - in Ukraine and socially oriented market economy with strong government regulation - in Belarus.

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