

THE ROMANIAN CENTRALIZED ORGANIZATIONS' RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

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ABSTRACT

We are in a period of significant change in our organizations and our communities. The need for focused leadership is critical and challenging for all. Some particular objectives of this study are to determine that: leadership and change are inextricably linked and their effectiveness in achieving beneficial outcomes for stakeholders is linked to their underlying ethical values; the importance of some approaches to change are more likely to lead to ethical outcomes than others; the need for greater ethical clarity when evaluating approaches to leadership and change; the study's objective is to demonstrate that the Romanian organization oppose change and are not adequately decentralized. There are fundamental differences between these two characteristics. Promoting the autocratic type, in combination with the bureaucratic compulsive type, determines a major gap between the executive managerial level and the operational one. The inadequate union activity is also responsible for the centralism within the organizations and the toxic influence it has on change. This paper presents the conclusions of a study regarding the Romanian union leader's perception.

Keywords: *leadership, centralism, decentralization of human resources, change, ethics.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a process that is not specifically a function of the person in charge. Leadership is a function of individual wills and individual needs, and the result of the dynamics of collective will organized to meet those various needs. Second, Leadership is a process of adaptation and evolution. Leadership and management are processes of dynamic exchange and the interchanges of value. Leadership is deviation from convention and a process of energy, not structure. This is the way in which Leadership is different from management: managers assure stability, while leadership is all about change ([1], Barker, 2001, p.491).

Leadership and change go hand in hand. They are also two of the most contentious and problematic elements of organizational life with much debate and Controversy over what constitutes Leadership and which are the benefits of change ([2], Beer and Nohria, 2000). As Burnes ([3], 2009; [4], 2012) points out, "implementing change in organization is not an usual aspect, only around 30% of all changes initiatives are successful" ([5]Bessant and Haywood1985; [6]Crosby, 1979; [7]Hammer and Champy 1993).

Entities, whether they be individuals, managers, teams or organizations, which do not adapt to change in timely manners, are unlikely to survive. *Fortune* magazine first published its list of America's top 500 companies in 1956. Sadly, only twenty nine companies from the top 100 on the original list remain today. The other seventy-one have disappeared through dissolution, merger, or downsizing. Survival even for the most successful companies cannot be taken for granted. Giants such as General Motors, Ford and Chrysler know that, to survive, they must adapt to accelerating and increasingly complex environmental dynamics. Today norms of change bring problems, challenges and opportunities.

Those individuals, managers and organizations that recognize the inevitability of change, learn to adapt to it, and attempt to manage it, will be the most successful.

Change is the coping process of moving a present state to a more desired state in response to dynamic internal and external factors. Essentially, change means that we have to do things differentially in the future. In general, most people dislike change because of the uncertainty between what is it and what might be. To successfully implement changes, managers need to possess the skills to convince others of the need for change, identify gaps between the current situation and desired conditions, create visions of desirable outcomes, design appropriate interventions, and implement them so that desired outcomes will be obtained. There are two major types of change. The first is unplanned change that is forced on an organization by the external environment. This type of change occurs and is dealt with as it happens through emergency measures- a practice often called fire fighting. Sources of unplanned change include technology, economic conditions, global competition, world politics, social and demographic changes and internal challenges.

Another type of change is planned. It results from deliberate attempts by managers to improve organizational operations. One example is total quality management, with a focuses on continuous process improvement. Short-run programs of implementing changes have usually unintended dysfunctional effects on participant satisfaction and the long term goal of the organization. Change programs that are aimed at improving long-term effectiveness, efficiency, and participant well-being are usually more successful.

The Lewin's experiment established the three phases of planned change, from the unfreeze, that determines change, that determines refreeze. ([8], Lewin, 1951).

In the first phase, a manager needs to help people accept that change is needed because the existing

situation is not adequate. Existing attitudes and behaviors need to be altered during this phase, so that resistance to change is minimized. Unfreezing requires some event to upset current work norms and relationships. Sometimes this occurs naturally, as with changes in the economy and technology. More often, however, managers need to provide the impetus to let go of old ways of doing things. It helps to explain how the change can increase productivity for the organization, but is also necessary to demonstrate the consequences on the participants of not changing. They need to understand that the cost of making the change will be worth some other gain they care about. Managers' goals are to help the participants see the need for a change and to increase their willingness to help make the change a success. ([9] Grigoruș C., Anechitoae C., 2010)

2. LEADING CHANGE

2.1. Leaders' Identity Work. Transformational leadership

The ways individuals craft, uphold and revise their identities-captured within the definition of identity work have gathered much attention from organizational scholars. Researchers have elucidated how individuals shape their self-conceptions, within social interactions, in order to transition into or sustain a desired role ([10] Ibarra, 1999; [11] Kreiner, Hollensbe& Sheep, 2006; [12] Pratt, Rockmann& Kaufmann, 2006; [13] Thornborrow& Brown, 2009, apud [14] Petriglieri, 2012) or to avoid the taint associated with a stigmatized one [15] Ashfort& Kreiner, 1999; [16] Snow& Anderson, 1987). These studies have deemed identity work successful of individuals manage to craft identities that sustain their self-esteem and grant their social validation in their roles, and have provided the foundations for an emergent stream of organization studies concerned with the identity dynamics underpinning the emergence and the exercise of the leadership ([17] Day& Harrison, 2007; [18] De Rue&Asford, 2010; [19] Ibarra, Snook, & Guilen Ramo, 2010; [20] Lord& Hall, 2005).

Leadership is not synonymous with occupying position of formal authority or enacting requisite styles, and endeavors to account the interaction of intra-psycho and social dynamics in the making of demise, of leaders([21] DeRue & Ashford, 2010). The leaders are more effective when their message is deeply personal and yet touches shared concerns ([22] Petriglieri, 2011, p.6). Some other authors describe the leadership performance on the transformational attributes (consider contingencies to determine the best interventions). The best strategy for changing a given situation depends on various contingencies. Key factors to consider include time; importance; anticipated resistance; power situations; ability; knowledge and resources required; and source of relevant data. If a change needs to be made quickly and it is not critical important, and if resistance is not anticipated, using direct authority may be appropriate. However, if the change is important, resistance is anticipated, and the power of position of

those who must change is relatively high, a participative approach might be more suitable.

Leaders can help people get through the transition period by anticipating sub-par performance and attitudinal problems and by being ready with increased support, education, encouragement and resources to help employees adapt. When people begin to experience positive results, the new behaviors will become internalized and external supports given by the manager can be reduced. Managing of change situations is also an attribute of transformational leadership. Introducing a change seldom leads immediately to the desired results because people require time to learn how to behave differently. Individual performance usually declines during the learning period, introducing fear and anxiety among participants. During this period, many participants may experience a strong desire to return to more familiar and proven behaviors.

In order to ascertain whether the change is accomplishing desired results, information needs to be gathered and compared to benchmark goals. If feedback from surveys, sensing groups, or interviews indicates that initial enthusiasm has faded as people encounter operating problems, leaders need to intervene to sustain the momentum, with motivating processes.

In *Corporate Pathfinders*, Phil Hunsaker apud. Harold Levitt ([23] Homewood, IL: Dow Jones-Irwin, 1996) describes the primary factors that a manager can target for change:

Strategy: develop new visions, missions, strategic plans;

Structure: add a new department or division, or consolidate two existing ones;

People: replace a person; or change knowledge, skills, attitudes or behaviors;

Technology: Upgrade a data processing system;

Processes: Change the pay system from hourly wages to salaries;

Management: Encourage participation, by those involved, in the solutions to the problems;

Product& Service: Marketing people pass customer complaints to research to use in the design of new products.

These solutions include strategy, structure, people, technology, processes, management, products and services. Because change targets are interdependent parts of the organizational system, a change in one will usually affect others. For example, a new strategic plan may lead to new products, which in turn stretch goals for people and require changes in technology. Changes in people and culture may also be necessary to overcome resistance to change.

Although, managers do have a responsibility to identify areas of improvement they should always be open to bottom up ideas. Employees at lower levels have the most expertise to propose meaningful changes in the jobs they perform.

Resistance to change is obvious when actions such as strikes, slowdowns, and complaints occur. It is more difficult to detect resistance that is implicit, such as decreased motivation or loyalty. Resistance to change is sometimes beneficial because it promotes functional conflict and debates, which can promote more thorough

analyses of alternatives and their consequences. On the other hand, excessive or irrational resistance could hinder progress and even survival. Why is change often resisted even when its benefits clearly outweigh its costs? The following paragraphs describe the main reasons why change is resisted. Some are based in human nature, and others are created by organizational dynamics.

People often perceive the same things differently. Individuals tend to focus on how they will be personally affected by change rather than seeing the big picture for the entire organization. People resist change if they do not understand what is expected or why the change is important. Many people take the attitude "if it is not broken, don't fix it". If the reasons for change are not clearly presented, the worst is often assumed in terms of initiator intentions and personal impact. In addition, if people do not have enough information about how to change, they won't know how to do it and will not try. Individuals resist change when they are uncertain about how it will affect their well-being. They will ask themselves, for example, how will downsizing or new automation affect my job security? Other fears include not being able to perform as well as before change; losing position, income, status, or power; having to perform less convenient or more difficult work; and losing desirable social interactions.

Organizational processes that appear to be working satisfactorily are not usually improved upon, even though environmental conditions may have changed in ways that indicate changes are desired. People prefer familiar actions and events, even if they are not optimal. Breaking a habit is difficult, because it takes hard work and involves giving up benefits that the habit provided, even if the new behavior has more desirable consequences.

People usually react negatively to changes that seem arbitrary and unreasonable. They get angry when timing and implementation of changes lack consideration of their concerns. When their thoughts and feelings about changes that affect them are not considered, people feel controlled and fear that they are losing autonomy over their work lives. These types of actions decrease trust in the initiators' intentions, breed resentment, and promote resistance to change.

Changes that are beneficial to one group may be dysfunctional to another. People usually think of themselves first when evaluating potential changes. They support those who enhance their own welfare, but resist the one that reduces it. People benefiting from changes in decision-making authority, control of resource allocations, or job assignments will endorse change, but those losing benefits will resist.

Organizations create hierarchies, subgroups, rules, procedures, values, and norms to promote order and guide behavior. Organizational changes usually alter this structural stability, so they are resisted.

Harvard professors John Kotter and Leonard Schlesinger ([23] Hunsaker, Aleesandra, 2008, p.321) have developed some general strategies for overcoming resistance to change. Several of these strategies can also be applied simultaneously. Even if the consequences of a change are generally perceived as positive, extensive communication will help reduce anxiety and ensure that

people understand what is happening, what will be expected of them, and how they will be supported in adapting to change. The objective is to help people learn beforehand the reasons for the change, how it will occur, and what the likely consequences will be.

Education and communication are commonly used where people lack information about the change or have received inaccurate information. Educating people about change can be very time consuming, but if people are persuaded that the change is a good thing, they will help with the implementation.

2.2. Bureaucratic cultures and compulsive type organizations

The compulsive personality reaches faster to the top of the career. Although in the management's point of view they are considered masters, the effects on the organization are toxic. Compulsive managers fear that they might find themselves in certain forms of dependency towards people or events. The main preoccupation is, to dominate or being in control. Interpersonal relationships are interpreted in terms of domination and obedience. In areas where they are in charge, they insist that the lower ranking personnel accomplish their objectives without any objections. The compulsives have a sense of perfectionism which hinders them to see the big picture ([24] Manfred Kets de Vries, 1981:2003). They are preoccupied with details, establishing norms, regulations and procedures which will correspond to certain easy tasks. They prefer the routine; they are not able to stray from the planned activities, from their environment and are inflexible to change. They lack creativity, spontaneity; form is more important than the essence, the need for affiliation and relating do not manifest themselves. The usual characteristics of this manner of leadership are as follows: thoroughness, dogmatism and stubbornness, which is translated into an excessive preoccupation for the rational-legal climate, for the management's organization function and efficiency. Managing decisions is a very difficult task; the important decisions are often delayed, due to the fear that the actions might not be as efficient as were expected. The compulsive manager is a workaholic; the perception created is that "to work hard", the devotion and involvement leading to the neglect of interpersonal relationships.

The organizational culture created by this type of leadership is one that is resistant to change and it promotes an untrustworthy environment. In order to implement the coordinating function of management, the leader will prefer the formal mechanisms of control, in favor of the people's willingness, demand in favor of determination. The decisional process is accompanied by persuasion, beyond the limit of manipulation and suspiciousness. The leader's preoccupation with control will limit the employees' freedom of action, in a conflicting manner. The intrinsic motivations do not work, the organization is not decentralized and the human resources structure is divided between the decisional players (executive managerial level) and the laborer (operational level). The bureaucratic culture of the group is impersonal and inflexible, overrun by the

preoccupation for control, operations and external environment. This type of leaders does not lead by means of guidance and determination of the people; they lead by demanding and legal – rational authority. The compulsive organizations do all they can to manage surprises and monitor, in certain predictable conditions, everything that happens within the organizations. The bureaucrats are the ones that feel motivated in this type of organizational system. The autonomous persons feel discouraged due to the fact that their freedom of action is confined. Whatever the management's quality and the manifestation of influential needs, this type of leader will not delegate the authority of control of the operation, limiting any type of participative management process.. ([25] Grigorut C., Berea A-O., Balaceanu, A-V., 2008). The organizational policies are not determined by the objective adaptive needs; instead they are determined by the leader's compulsiveness. The type of operation is done routinely and dominated by the interest for what's taking place within the organization. The details are carefully planned and projected, emphasizing on being thorough, precise and conformed. Just like the suspicious firms, the compulsive ones tend to emphasize on the function of control of management, although presenting specific differences. Within the compulsive firms, the control mechanisms are conceived in such a manner that it will monitor the internal aspects of the operations (productivity, costs, programming the activities and performances of the projects), whilst within the suspicious ones the control has to do with the external ones. The control mechanisms of the compulsive firms include the standardization of operations and formalizing the procedures and policies. Their procedures refer to the actions regarding production, marketing, as well as to the dress code, meeting and employees' attitude.

The compulsive firms' concentration towards the center is reflected in their strategies as well. The compulsive companies that pride themselves in a market leader position can continue to launch new products, even when the conditions do not recommend other innovations. Orienting towards the center, does not offer the compulsive type manager a correct analysis of the market ([24] de Vries, 2003, p.181). Variations are characteristics of the compulsive companies: the leaders fluctuate from innovations to the incremental lines, towards aged production lines, from a position of leader of costs towards a destructive parsimony, from the high quality line towards the total neglect regarding the quality criteria.

Management control and the change of leadership can be achieved as follows:

- demolishing the existing bureaucratic structures
- involvement in a diversification program in related areas
- major investments in research and development
- motivating entrepreneurial management and strategic innovations
- opening towards the market, quality management principles and clients' needs

- quantification of the comparison criteria with organizations that hold lead positions in certain operations (benchmarking).

2.3. *Change Management. Some ethical approaches*

In the article *Leadership and change: the case for a greater ethical clarity*, Bernard Burnes and Rune Todnem ([26] 2012, p. 241) examined "the developments in leadership over the last three decades and how these relate to change and ethics". The article reviewed the two main approaches to organisational change-Planned and Emergent change-and the implications of these for ethical behaviour by leaders. Paper explored the implications for leadership and change of the consequentialist perspective on ethics, followed by a discussion of implications for organisations of the ethics underpinning the different approaches to leadership and change." The article concludes that only with greater ethical clarity can organisations ensure that their leaders will undertake changes which serve the interests of all stakeholders and avoid the financial scandals and collapses of the past two decades".

In making the case for a greater ethical clarity in relation to leadership and change, authors adopted a consequentialist perspective on ethics. Consequentialism is a philosophy which holds that the value of action drives from the value of its consequences ([27] Blackburn 2008; [28] Kaler 2000; [29] Burnes etTodnem, 2012). Stakeholders have a positive and active role to play in identifying and ending unethical practices.

3. CONTENT ANALYSIS REGARDING THE ETHICAL BEHAVIOR OF THE UNION LEADERS IN THE ROMANIAN MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE

The study's objective was to demonstrate that the Romanian organization oppose change and are not adequately decentralized. There are fundamental differences between these two characteristics. Promoting the autocratic type, in combination with the bureaucratic compulsive type, determines a major gap between the executive managerial level and the operational one. The inadequate union activity is also responsible for the **centralism** within the organizations and the toxic influence it has on change ([30], Surugiu, 2012, 303). These are the conclusions of a study regarding the Romanian union leader's perception.

In order to identify the social perception on the union leaders, we have conducted 80 unstructured interviews with the employees, at different levels and on certain areas ([31], Mina, 2009, 252). The recorded interviews have been subjected to scrupulous content analysis, resulting, due to the frequency of certain words, 5 subjects. The predominant subject is that of political involvement, expressed by phrases such as : "He/she like being with the ones in power...", "He/she carries out whatever the party tells them to", "...he/she negotiated on their own terms (the ones in power)", He/she is persuaded by the ones in power....", etc.

The conflicting attitude in the group relationships represent the second important subject, manifested by phrases such as "He/she talks nonsense/badly...", "They treat us in a condescending manner...", "They think they are better than us...", "He/she is autocratic", etc.

The union leaders are also perceived as being weak negotiators, materialized by phrases such as: "He doesn't know how to fight for our interests...", "He doesn't know how to communicate to the management..", "He can barely speak, and when he does, the director does it for him...", etc.

Another important subject regards the personal interest, therefore the interviewed persons use expressions such as: "He's changed three cars since he's become union leader...", "He is only interested in money...", "He knows how to address the problem only if there is something in it for him...", "He is interested only for his personal gain, the collective objectives being the last thing on his mind...", etc.

We can also notice the inadequate relation with mass media, a union leader's characteristic. The most frequent expressions that lead to this subject are: "He is afraid of making any statements...", "He would probably run if the TV reporters were to drop by...", "He is ethically compromised, he is afraid of articles from the press...", "He is a weak relationist, who organizes inadequate press conferences", etc.

The informational basis of the content analysis ([32], Chelcea, 2001) has been constituted by the 80 protocols, the research group being formed by 48 men (60%) and 32 women (40%):

Table 1 The biologic gender

	Frequency	Percent%	Valid Percent	Cumulative percent
Masculine	48	60.0	60.0	60.0
Feminine	32	40.0	40.0	100.0
The Total	80	100.0	100.0	

With regards to the active period within the institution, the interviewed subjects have an average of 9.26 years, a median of 10 years and a standard deviation of 3.09 years. The most frequent category is that of 11 years, active period of employees being between 4 and 14 years.

Based on the median value ([33] Schermerhon, 2002, pp.349-356) we can appreciate that the subjects with less than 10 years are considered relatively new subjects within the institution, and the ones that have over 10 years are considered older.

From the afore mentioned data it results that the distribution of the 80 interviewed subjects regarding their active time within the institution is a symmetrical type (Skewness = -0.21; Skewness standard deviation = 0.26) and mesokurtic (Kurtosis = -1.06; Kurtosis standard deviation = 0.53), elements that validate as

normal the distribution of the lot with regard to the this characteristic.

Regarding the seniority level, we can appreciate that, out the 80 interviewed subjects, 53 people (66.3%) hold executive level positions and 27 (33.8%) hold headship positions.

Table 2 The seniority in the institution
Statistical Inventory

N	Valid	80
	Absent	0
Media		9,26
The median		10,00
Modul		11
Standard deviation		3,092
Skewness		-,213
Eroare Skewness		,269
Kurtosis		-1,069
Eroare Kurtosis		,532
Amplitudine		10
Minimum		4
Maximum		14

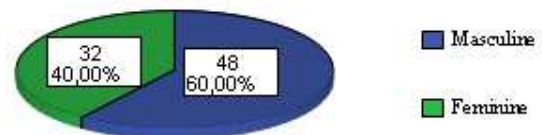


Figure 1 Biologic Gender

This relative imbalance is explained by the number of headship positions in comparison to the executor positions, within the organizational ensemble.

After identifying the subjects, we've proceeded to the codification of presence or absence of one of the five subjects, for every investigated subject. The presence of the subject was noted with a value of "1", whereas the absence has a value of "0".

4. CONCLUSIONS

A number of 53 interviewees (66.25%) have mentioned, in their protocols, the fact that the union leaders are weak negotiators, whereas 27 people (33.75%) were not present at this subject.

The "personal interest" subject has been identified in the case of 50 subjects (62.5%), whereas 30 subjects (37.5%) have not recognized this subject in the answers.

The political co-involvement has been identified as a subject by 60 people (75%), whereas 20 subjects (25%) have not perceived this subject about the union leaders.

Table 3 The hierarchy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Executional	53	66,25	66,25	66,25
	Managing	27	33,75	33,75	100,0
	Total	80	100,0	100,0	

Table 4 Absence of the negotiation attributes of leadership

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Absence of issue	27	33,75	33,75	33,75
	Presence of issue	53	66,25	66,25	100,0
	Total	80	100,0	100,0	

Table 5 Individual interest

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Absence of issue	30	37,5	37,5	37,5
	Presence of issue	50	62,5	62,5	100,0
	Total	80	100,0	100,0	

Table 6 Political implication

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Absence of issue	20	25	25	25
	Presence of issue	60	75	75	100,0
	Total	80	100,0	100,0	

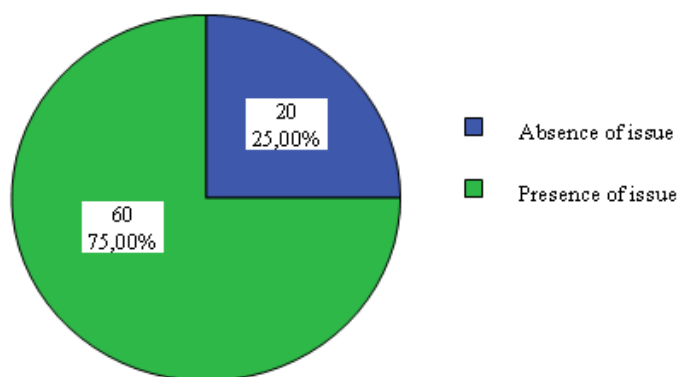


Figure 2 Political implication

The union leaders are being perceived as having an inadequate relation with the mass media (48 people-60%), whereas 32 interviewed subjects (40%) did not point out this aspect in their interview. The conflicting aspect among the group relations has been identified by 55 people (68.75%), whereas 25 people (31.25%) have not noticed this type of conflicting relations. In identifying the predominant subjects, we have used the non-parametric statistical test of difference X^2 between the observed frequency of appearance of an event and the theoretical frequency, when it is presumed the equal presence of the categories. Identifying the significant subjects with the help of the significant difference test, among the frequencies. As it can be noticed in the table, the main observed subject is political co-interest, an important subject, identified significantly by the interviewed subjects ($\chi^2=20.00$; $p<0.01$). Furthermore, the union leaders are significantly perceived as being conflicting regarding their group relations ($\chi^2=5.00$; $p<0.05$). The subject of inadequate relation with the mass

media, although important, cannot be considered significant. The difference of perception of the union leader by the senior hired personnel (greater than 10 years) in comparison with the latter hired personnel (lower than 10 years) has been studied with the help of significant difference test among the ranks U Mann-Whitney ([34] 2007, pp.41-90). The meaning of the significant difference among the senior personnel and the latter could be resumed:

- A general tendency of negative increase can be observed, in the sense of the present subject, of a number of 3 subjects: the individual interest ($Z=-2.66$; $p<0.01$), the inadequate capacity for negotiation ($Z=-2.12$; $p<0.05$) and the inadequate relation with the mass media ($Z=-2.11$; $p<0.05$). Within this context, the senior personnel have the tendency to significantly point out the presence of these subjects in comparison to the latter, younger personnel (lower than 10 years).

Table 7 Generates conflicts in working groups

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Absence of issue	25	31,25	31,25	31,25
	Presence of issue	55	68.75	68.75	100,0
	Total	80	100,0	100,0	

Table 8 Test Statistics

	Negotiation process	Individually interest	Politically Determination	Mass media Relationships	Managing conflicts
Mann-Whitney U	603,000	552,000	722,000	598,000	637,000
Wilcoxon W	1684,000	1633,000	1803,000	1679,000	1718,000
Z	-2,127	-2,669	-,779	-2,110	-1,758
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,033	,008	,436	,035	,079

a. Grouping Variable: Seniority

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