Strategic Management in Public Administration

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Abstract: Strategic management is a way of setting strategy by public organizations that integrates strategy, and thus includes its planning to formulate new strategies, ways to integrate strategies, as well as continuous strategic study. This strategic management can support public organizations to achieve their very important objectives as well as to develop public value. This strategy is what unites the capabilities and aspirations of public organizations. There are four types of strategists, as individuals, teams, organizations or collaborations and in public administration, as in other situations: the reactor who has low desires, mediocre capabilities, the dreamer, who aspires to special results, with low capabilities, i.e. the one who does not achieves nothing, another who has low aspirations, quite high capabilities, being also a skilled strategist, leading to high aspirations and high capabilities. There are eight approaches to strategic planning. Broader process approaches include those influenced by the Harvard Policy Model, i.e. logical incrementalism and stakeholder management. Process approaches in a partial way include strategic negotiations, the management of these strategic issues as well as strategic planning as a framework for continuous innovation. Finally, there are also two background approaches, namely an analysis of the portfolio as well as of the forces inscribed in competition.

Keywords: strategic management; public administration; dimensions; objectives, goals

Introduction

Usually, the public administration does not concern itself with the strategic situations of its activity; the consideration of the citizen as a subject of the administration is part of a wider vision that understood the role of this public service as a pro forma application of the orders of the politicians who were the only ones entitled to

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elaborate such policies and strategies. Accomplishing these administrative tasks was possible without long-term thinking and this constituted one of the problems criticized regarding the traditional model of public administration. Within this new managerial thinking, achieving results is today the focus of public institutions along with the concern for establishing long-term and very long-term strategies. For an analysis of the strategic dimension, the organization is analyzed in its environment, to specify the specific objectives and goals, which prepares the institution to adapt to an uncertain future. (Nutt, Backoff, 1992)

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Administrative institutions as well as civil servants in them are required to answer for the strategies adopted, the objectives and priorities established, as an intrinsic part of the managerial activity. Strategic management therefore refers to civil servants in positions of managerial responsibility, civil servants who must adapt on the fly to changes in daily work and relate to the general objectives established within the organization. This management is ultimately directly linked to civil servants at higher levels, from where strategic decisions come. Thus, we can consider the fact that strategic management designates the component of the activity of a public manager that materializes in the expansion of the horizon to think in the future of the action of the entity he manages. It contains two important aspects.

On the one hand, defining the objectives, strategy, principles, and operating structure of this institution, and on the other hand, measuring the impact, both in space and time, of a crucial measure that was taken.

A beneficial start in understanding the strategic approach is given by Chandler's definition (Chandler, 1989), namely that strategy is the establishment of long-term goals and objectives of the institution, the adoption of determined policies as well as the supply of adequate resources to achieve these goals. The definition shows all the major issues to which the strategic process must be folded, i.e., establishing the place where it must reach through advancement, what are the parameters in which the institution must fit, the policies that must be approached to achieve the objectives, what are the financial means that must be gears but also the necessary human resources.

The strategic approach in the managerial field has its origin in the field of military strategy, that is, in the use of the resources of an armed force to achieve goals, that

is, military victory, by building plans and objectives but also exercising them, and tries to create the image of a well-established process, of decision-making at the organizational level. Strategic management is important due to the emphasis it places on establishing strategic objectives, on identifying strong but also weak links, on the importance of emerging and favorable situations but also on external threats from the perspective of optimal establishment of forces to achieve objectives (Bryson, 1995), the identification of the different levels but also approaches from the widely established concept of managerial strategy that includes strategic planning systems that propose the methods of making and implementing strategic decisions, including the allocation of sufficient resources for their foundation at all levels of the institution. Analysis but also strategic planning is a widespread approach in private companies, which aims to assist management in achieving its mission of strategic management of the institution. Strategy can acquire a new definition in this context by choosing the decision criteria also called strategic because they aim to orient the organization's activities and structures in a decisive and long-term way (Tabatoni, Jarniou, 1975). The idea of strategic planning is inseparable from the notions of freedom and competition. The existence of a possibility of maneuver in the service of managers is a pre-existing condition for this strategic approach. Thus, we cannot speak of a true strategy in an organization where the perimeter of activity is totally limited or where the products are established by law. At the same time, it is considered that an organization must proceed with the implementation of certain strategies only to obtain as much as possible many advantages from an environment where there are competitive forces that risk reducing its survival. Defined in this way, the strategic approach may appear, in the public sector, to be less relevant because there is the theoretical absence of strategic margins of maneuver as well as the illegitimate character of the competition. The margin of freedom of these public organizations regarding the use of resources is quite limited compared to the statutory provisions. If a public organization wants to diversify its activity, there is an increased possibility of increasing the number of negative evaluations from the control bodies.

Competition can materialize, in the case of public organizations, under two aspects: competition with another public institution and competition with a private organization. Stakeholder management analyzes how they evaluate the organization, after which it formulates strategies for dealing with all stakeholders, which include individuals or groups of individuals who have a special interest in the organization, such as unions, customers, suppliers, etc. Competitive analysis analyzes all forces existing in a certain sector, at a given moment, the power of buyers but also of

suppliers, the products that can be substituted, i.e., the competition in the idea of obtaining a superior advantage through strategies such as establishing other objectives compared to the competition and selecting the production segments in which there are great possibilities of control. In the case of industry (Porter, 1995) there are five major threats that target companies:

- competition between existing companies.
- the threat of newcomers.
- the bargaining power of clients.
- possibility to negotiate with suppliers.
- the threat that exists due to substitutable products or services.

Strategic problem management aims to identify the basic problems for the organization's ability to achieve its objectives as well as to make decisions about how an individual or a group within the organization will respond to all these problems.

Approaches based on strategic negotiations consider strategic decision-making as a permanent and deeply politicized process while offering new ways of approaching these never-ending negotiations.

On the other hand, logical incrementalism specifies the incremental nature of these strategic decisions.

Several studies have focused on the way in which public organizations define and implement strategic goals, observing a significant influence of elements that are distinguished in the public sector on this field. Wechsler and Backoff identified four distinct types of strategies used by public institutions (Wechsler, Backoff, 1986):

- a development strategy for public institutions with objectives and independent funding sources; in these, managers have a relative independence in relation to the structuring of the capacities, resources as well as the performance of the organization.
- a strategy of metamorphosis in the case of institutions that, due to pecuniary pressures and those due to external groups, change the mode of operation from the modest management of the public institution to the creation of a performing management in the service of the clients and the community.
- an increased protection strategy in the case of institutions facing special criticism from the media and the legislator, but also with increased demands from the public as well as possible decreases in budget allocations. These institutions will strengthen internal control, take steps to reduce the public

profile of the organization, strengthen the relationship with the legislature to protect their funding levels. (Stancu A., 2013).

- a political strategy in the case of institutions that want to make decisions favorable to only one type of participants, established according to the configuration of groups or individuals that can decisively change the organization.

This typology offered by Miles and Snow (Miles, Snow, 1978) implies several types of reaction of public actors from the point of view of strategic decisions: the defensive ones that appear in stable environments and that try to protect their already held position , emphasizing efficiency and centralization.; analysts who correspond to contexts of development through moderate modification and aim for a position similar to the previous one, but which still allows a controlled development of innovation processes; the prospectors, who can be found in constant environments of dynamism but also growth, and who look for opportunities but who also take risks, bringing a decentralized but organic management; reactants, which can be identified in any environment, functioning without a particular purpose, responding only to existing conditions. Absolutely all these elements show once more, the existence of significant changes regarding the strategic ways of public managers; thus, we can consider that significant resources exist for public management to show that it can change the existing image regarding its inability to establish and implement strategic objectives.

The making of these strategic decisions in the public domain is conducted in a specific context characterized by:

- the ambiguity of the policies used, which are much more diffusely defined than in the case of private companies.
- the existence of greater vulnerability to the involvement and influence of the media, politicians, and other organizations, as well as increased attention paid to these decisive factors.
- artificial time constraints installments of periodic electoral elections.
- unstable associations that can lead to stopping or diminishing policies or solutions.

The strategic approach finds different ways of application in the case of public administration; we can identify, at the state level, the existence of strategic planning; under the influence of the practices in force in the large industrial groups, planning at the state level assimilated an increasingly accentuated strategic dimension.

Without a doubt, defining a strategy for the entire state is too ambitious an action, given the existence of a specific political rationality: the entire political act is a compromise. When a law is formulated in Parliament or elsewhere, the purpose of this effort is not to vote on the ideal law, but to find the political position that will allow a law to pass. This necessarily involves a vague and less precise language, the language of compromise. It is therefore clear that the formulation of a global strategy aimed at optimizing the state's action is hardly possible. instead, the planning function can evolve in the direction of supporting the governors in determining priorities and defining programs.

Cooperation strategies have been established which have as their main purpose the sharing among several entities of an investment far too large for a single organization to afford; these cooperations can exist both in the public sector, but also between the public and the private sector, as in the case of medical equipment too expensive for a single hospital, or in educational or public health units, in the case of some local common entities.

The local strategic approach can allow the identification of some possibilities for the development of the strategic approach within local organizations. Observing political life at the level of local authorities demonstrates the existence of some fields of competition that can manifest themselves in different forms. Local strategic dynamics have fundamentally changed in democratic societies under the influence of three main factors:

- increasing competition between local entities; the problem of competition can manifest itself not only between neighboring entities but also at a general or European level under the influence of the progressive opening of borders and the globalization of economic activities. The areas of competition mainly concern:
- industrial implantations, positioning on major communication axes and obtaining state aid.
- strengthening the room for maneuver at the local level, including regarding financial issues).
- transformation of the profile and content of the civil servant job; the emergence of a new generation of civil servants, with a higher level of education, focused on privileging a technical approach regarding the exercise of local power.

All these elements can allow local communities to implement a strategic approach to their own action; linear strategies can be replaced by more ambitious and voluntary strategies, which allow local authorities to significantly influence the environment in which they operate.

In the specialized literature, a difference was made between strategic planning and strategic management; strategic planning put into discussion for the first time two essential terms: mission and environmental analysis (Hax, Mailuf, 1984). In the case of private companies, the mission entails a clear establishment of objectives, products, markets, and performance expectations over a period of at least several years. (Hughes, 1988) Environmental analysis leads to a detailed examination of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, contingencies, and opportunities; although it also involves internal elements of the organization, such as managerial capabilities, human resources characteristics, its financial structures, etc., the major advantage of this analysis mainly refers to the achievement of an objective control of the external environment, by checking the market structure and trends, of possible technological changes, or the threat of competition as well as any other points likely to harm the existence of the institution in question. Objectives are specific objectives resulting from mission definition as well as environmental analysis. Building a business plan with a well-defined medium or long-term strategy starts from defining missions, objectives and carrying out a broad environmental analysis, in relation to performance measurement as well as resource allocation.

This strategic management can be considered a more nuanced form that incorporates and expands the characteristics of strategic planning; the difference between the two terms is that strategic planning is focused on making optimal strategic decisions while strategic management is focused on producing strategic results: new markets, new products, new technologies. (Ansoff, 1988). Strategic management aims at expanding the strategic vision at all levels of the organization and in all administrative systems; he recognizes the central role of individuals and groups as well as the influence of organizational culture (Toft, 1989).

Planning should not be seen as a separate activity, isolated from the organization, but as a responsibility of the management that must achieve the integration of its specific activities with the control function, with the organizational structure, with the communication and motivation systems (Hax, Mailuf, 1984). Also, the organization must pay special attention to its own culture; the implementation of the strategy and even the type of management are extremely dependent on the characteristics of the human resource and the existing organizational culture.

Strategic planning and strategic management are terms that have proven their usefulness in the private sector, but their adoption in the case of the public sector cannot be done automatically; public managers must treat with care the approaches of private firms that incorporate clear goals and objectives, profit, unlimited authority in action, confidential developments of operations, limited responsibility, signals from the market, etc. and that may present limited validity in the public sector (Nutt, Backoff, 1992). A limited understanding of public management can lead to errors of perception regarding strategy and its role in the administrative system; ; Bozeman and Straussman, (Bozeman, Straussman, 1990) start from the fact that the strategy in the public domain leads to the approach to the relationship with the environment, but also to the missions and goals of the organization; this strategic approach includes three major components: the concrete establishment of goals and objectives, the development of a realistic plan of action that makes the connections between the organization and its environment, as well as the construction of effective implementation models. The strategy involves establishing the objectives but also the organizational priorities, based on forecasts regarding the impact of the external environment and the organization's capabilities in designating the operational plans through which the established objectives can be achieved.

Strategic beginnings in the public domain mostly referred to strategic planning, defined as a docile effort to produce fundamental decisions that influence the nature but also the direction of government activities, relative to legislation and constitutional provisions (Olsen, Eadie, 1982). A more in-depth analysis of strategic planning gives us the following components:

- missions and general goals set by managers located at higher levels and which provide the framework for the development of strategies.
- the environmental analysis, which consists in establishing and analyzing the factors that will be considered when concretizing organizational strategies.
- observation of the internal structure and resources, observation that identifies the weak or strong links of the organization to incorporate a variety of factors in strategic considerations, through the formulation, calculation, and selection of strategies, or through the implementation and verification of strategic plans. (Osborne, Gaebler, 1993).

Osborne and Gaebler (1993) considered that strategic planning is a continuous process of examining the present situation but also the future projection of an organization or community, by establishing objectives, developing a strategy to

achieve them and measuring the results, an effort that require a series of distinct steps:

- internal and external analysis of the situation.
- diagnosis or identification of key problems faced by the organization.
- defining the fundamental missions of the organization.
- articulating the main goals of the organization.
- developing a vision: what does organizational success look like.
- developing a strategy for structuring the vision and goals; - development of a time schedule of the strategy; - measurement and evaluation of results.

This analysis is based on the strategic planning model in eight steps defined by Bryson (1995), (Bryson, 1995), and which includes:

• initiation and aggregation of a strategic planning process; the procedures offered by the theorists, from the management of strategic problems to environmental analysis and SWOT analysis, generally assume an initial phase of planning and organization that involves the existence of a strategic management group (SMG) that contains a team of 5-10 people in which not only managers from the upper levels are included but also those placed at operational levels close to field activities (McCaffery, 1989); this group will ensure the management of the strategic process, will decide who should be involved in this activity, how the strategic analyzes will take place, what are the expectations of the managerial level and can become the main source of ideas regarding change in the organization.;

• preliminary analysis of the history and current situation of the organization with the idea of building a list of its missions. ¿in the case of public organizations, this implies a careful examination of the mandates offered by external authorities through legislation and regulations (this has a special weight in the case of the public sector; while the private organization can establish its goals directly and flexibly, the public organization must consider in its routine activity the limits specified by the legislation).

• clearly establishing the organization's missions and objectives - a much more difficult step for the public sector than it appears at first glance, because missions and objectives tend to be, intentionally or not, often set at a high level of imprecision. Establishing the list of tasks to be undertaken, involves the manager's analysis of the organization's environment as well as of the participants, as well as the development of an immaterial vision of how the organization should look in the future. The

enumeration of the missions ultimately implies the expression of the purpose but also of the essential values of the organization.

• the analysis of the external environment through possibilities and difficulties implicitly leads to the fact that the traditional public administration has promoted a criticized single model, related only to the internal functioning of the apparatus and too little interested in the impact in the external environment. Public organizations usually live in a complex environment that includes both difficulties and opportunities, and the development of the strategic perspective supports an overcoming of the surface analysis, but also the creation of a clear image of the position of the public institution in a complex environment. Public organizations tend to react rather than contribute in their relationship with the environment, and this has particular consequences in establishing this strategic process.

• analysis of the internal environment (strengths and weaknesses); the existing major deficiencies in the internal functioning can bring the organization to an extremely vulnerable position in an external environment based on major pressures towards the efficiency and accountability of the public domain; the organization must have a clear picture of its financial dimensions , operational and human resource and try to develop a critical vision in the analysis of the functioning of their own structures; even if this proves to be extremely difficult in practice, the lack of internal analysis capabilities can lead to the impossibility of defining a strategic perspective; the approach regarding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats is known as SWOT analysis (Nutt & Backhoff, 1992);

• identification of the strategic problems faced by the organization; strategic problems refer to problems capable of influencing the organization's long-term functioning capacity; they must be identified and treated separately from the organization's routine problems and form the basis of the organization's strategies.

• formulating strategies to solve these problems.

• establishing an effective organizational vision for the future; the vision is vaguer than the organization's mission (although the differences between these two terms are not very clear) and refers to a common perspective of the organization's future, an example in this field could be the formulation of the citizen's charter by public administrations).

Strategic planning requires a general effort to gather information, explore alternatives and consider the future effects of present decisions. Unfortunately, very often, strategic planning is felt at the level of public administration through the

simple elaboration of official documents that do not constitute a means of achieving managerial efficiency, but rather a bureaucratic artifice.

Even in the public sector, strategic management is distinguished as representing a more refined but also more elaborate way of imposed strategic planning; for this reason, the main guideline of strategic management is related to the integration of this planning function in all the general managerial activities addressed. In the same way as in the private sector, planning involves an analysis of the environment to identify existing opportunities as well as threats, but at the same time, and formulating plans to consider the results of this analysis; strategic management comes to add to this combination of strategic implementation and control. (Montanari, Daneke, 1989). Bozeman and Straussman (Bozeman, Straussman, 1990) discovered four specific elements of strategic management: long-term concerns, integration of all goals and objectives into a common-sense hierarchy, recognition that strategic planning and strategic management cannot be implemented alone, as well as an external perspective that focuses not on adapting to the environment, but on anticipating and integrating all the changes that occur in relation to the environment; in public organizations strategic management uses an additional mode: the strategic perspective must be closely related to political authority.

Strategic management includes (Eadie, 1989) activity orientation elements (any action/document contains implementation processes, detailed action plans, time scheduling, specific responsibilities, and costs), recognition of the importance of organizational design and the human factor, achieving strategic goals is directly related to the organization's capabilities, including financial and human resource.

An increased attention for the construction of the strategic plan and for the implementation segment represent distinctive characteristics of strategic management; Nutt and Backoff (1992) analyzed six distinct points in the creation of a strategic plan:

• tracing the historical context of the organization in terms of trends within its own environment, general direction and normative ideas, GMS must always consider, in formulating strategies, the history and culture of the organization.

• immediate analysis of the situation in relation to the current strong links and very weak links, future opportunities, and dangers; starting the solution from the organization's resources as an important but also necessary step for any desire to build a bright organizational future.

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• developing an agenda of strategic issues that require the attention of the managerial level; The GMS must identify the issues that are relevant to the organization in the current or prospective environment and make connections between them.

• development of strategies; GMS must develop alternative strategies in response to the key problems identified, the strategies being related to the resources held.

• analysis of strategic options in terms of feasibility; some options may be unrealistic from the point of view of existing legislation, financial resources, obtaining political support, etc.; the realistic analysis of the resources and participants involved is a necessary and inevitable step in strategic management.

• implementing priority strategies by mobilizing resources and dealing with the relationship with interested participants; the problems arising in the process of implementing strategic plans and decisions are not only very important but an inevitable for the organization; the best strategies mean nothing apart from a coherent process of operationalization. The importance of human resources tends to be decisive at this level as well; the resistance to change, the mindsets and networks of the organization can essentially modify the strategic approach: people are always more important, in development through strategic planning, than the planning mechanisms themselves; special attention is thus paid to human resources as a basic element of strategic management. The recognition of work in the collective effort both in the initiation and implementation of strategies leads to the situation where the building of managerial teams becomes a basic element for the fulfillment of strategic processes. (Eadie, 1989). The simple imposition of some plans and strategies by a separate specialized entity is not always viewed with good eyes due to the danger that the other members of the organization do not recognize themselves in the designated objectives and therefore do not get involved. ¿ Obviously this change can prove much more difficult in the case of public organizations that are less flexible, dynamic and change oriented.

It is important that strategic management is perceived at the three existing levels: strategic, tactical and operational (Bozeman, Straussman, 1990). The strategy refers to the determination of the organization's missions and vision; for example, a government agency in charge of promoting regional cooperation must define what this term means, what are the objectives pursued, what instruments exist to achieve the objectives and what is the cost of the operations that must be carried out. The tactical level refers to the taking over from several alternatives of a single way of achieving an objective and is also registered as a typical activity that public managers

establish. The operational level refers to the current activities carried out in the institution precisely to achieve these objectives. The most significant problems arise at the strategic level, where the public sector is much more vulnerable to external influences and pressures than the private sector. Risk-taking also represents a significant public/private difference at the level of tactical decisions; even if public managers make disastrous decisions, the danger of the organization's disappearance is minimal; anyway, from this point of view there is a significant pressure for the legal responsibility of civil servants in the case of committing acts considered to be outside the legal framework.

The adoption of this type of strategic management in the public sector implies much more than the simple production of documents in which a series of objectives, goals or strategic missions are listed; this requires an intellectual effort to integrate the strategic perspective at all managerial levels so that the operation is coherent. Although this initial stage of a strategic planning occurs much more frequently in the public sector, the adoption of strategic management as part of the management of public organizations is necessary to achieve the expected results.

If the strategic approaches will have specific characteristics of each administration, first of all at the level of implementation, it is possible to identify some typical elements of a strategic approach (Bozeman, Straussman, 1990) by defining the space in which managerial action is taken, through the concepts of policy, program and so on which are vague and assume different meanings in the area of use; strategic management requires an explanation of the public policy in the analyzed case as much as possible, although public managers are very rarely involved in the process of establishing the directions of action.

Explaining these strategic concerns: when the obscurity of objectives is carried to a high level in the public sector and the pressures for change from outside are too strong, one of the most indispensable tasks of management relates to determining what needs to be done and including, by whom. The administrative agenda can include many actors: from interest groups to the multitude of political parties, from the mass media to ordinary citizens; in most cases, the public manager can be put in the unpleasant position of being given objectives that they obviously exceed his calculations, but also the rational expectations of others. (Stancu A., 2013).

Monitoring the history of problems, as a method, refers to a careful observation, but also to an analysis of the growth of a pressing problem over time; by analyzing previous developments, the history of the organization can give concrete models of

operation, it can make connections between disparate events at first sight as well as the test of causal networks that can provide preliminary explanations for certain developments studied while also providing theories that lead to the basis of understanding what will follow. (Einhorh, Hogarth, 1987). The best example, in our understanding, from this point of view, relates to the growing development of administrative reform, it being surprising how few reforms that have begun have been related to historical lessons and experiences.

The choice of implementation alternatives is another major problem faced in precise terms, because extremely rarely the political decision is directed towards the direction of adopting certain programs; the role of the public manager is therefore to implement these abstract concepts. In choosing a single implementation alternative, several criteria can be introduced: cost factors, existing legislative constraints, possession or non-possession of useful resources, especially human resources, time and space estimates in relation to the realization of a program, etc.

Regarding redundancy in the case of this strategic process, it has traditionally been established that all reform movements have focused on the idea of streamlining public administration and from this point of view, the presence of many institutions providing the same services is perceived negatively. However, in certain situations (Bendor, 1985), achieving competition at the level of organizations can concretely improve administrative performance, as for example by contracting services from outside the public institution.

In developing the implementation process, strategic management must be flexible, because the development of established plans does not always materialize favorably, according to initial considerations; reconsidering these strategies can be a necessary but also sufficient alternative for recovery, in certain situations. The implementation is not static. It implies changes in the administration, which in turn imply changes in the theoretical guidelines that were the basis of the programs or policies, and which, in turn, can cause changes in the institution's priorities. Managerial levels undergo several significant changes in the public sector, but which may affect the way of implementation. There are also situations in which budgetary resources register major variations, for any reason, or the problem in question is solved or is no longer provided for in the administrative agenda.

Conclusion

The most important source of adaptation of the organization regarding the implementation, refers to the struggle between the internal forces of the organization and the external environment; the approach to these implementation processes cannot be linear due to the continuous increase and decrease of influencing factors from inside or outside.

Public administration in contemporary institutions cannot stop by considering the impact that a turbulent, constantly changing environment can have on it; this identification of missions, goals or organizational objectives is not only a management strategy, but implicitly, a way of survival. Regardless of whether strategic management is to suffer great pressure in the case of its application in the public domain, its possibility to change the traditional, grounded administrative model remains very high; even if its application will not automatically ensure guaranteed success, it will certainly bring more rationality to a public administration, most of the time too little involved in the objectives placed at a distance from its humble existence and development.

Acknowledgment

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