Corruption and Citizen Participation: A Critical Analysis

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Abstract: This article examines the conditions under which corruption manifests and persists. As such, it also seeks to understand how corruption thrives in certain spaces and not in others. This article is conceptual in nature as it relies, to a large extent, on secondary sources of data. By contextualizing corruption and active citizenship, it opens up the possibilities to conceptualize them as it poses such questions as: Does context matter? Do citizens matter? Who and what else matters? Under what conditions? How active can the citizens be? And Under what conditions can their actions thrive? It then presents a hexagon of good governance which is its major contribution. The hexagon posits that for good governance to prevail, the following elements are necessary: a virtuous Constitution which protects the rights of citizens; a respectable Government characterized by an independent judiciary, and astute legal system including a parliament which exercises its oversight role with effectiveness as well as a well capacitated and trim bureaucracy; upright people characterized by a civil society with capacity and readiness to take action against corruption; a noble culture which loathes corruption; political will and leadership directed towards addressing corruption; and a free press to expose incidences of corruption, mal-administration and so forth. Active citizenship is about community, social cohesion, individual and collective decision-making, individual and collective action for the betterment of all who live in that community. The fight against corruption equally requires strong local leadership and strong social ties because these elements are crucial for social mobilization. Community readiness for change and collective efficacy remain crucial for collective action.

Keywords: Corruption, Good Governance; Free Press, People, Government, Culture

Introduction

The issue of corruption is contemporary and affects many countries. Corruption is bad to the extent that it can encumber efficient service delivery. The persistence of protest action is a manifestation of the discomfort of citizens with their circumstances. These (re)-actions by citizens cannot be wished

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away because they carry socio-economic, political and even psychological costs to society. In all corrupt circumstances, there is a corrupter and corruptee. As such, the contamination of society by corruption is a moral blemish on that society in which it's ethical and governance structures come under question. This article is guided by the following research questions:

- Under which conditions does corruption persist?
- How active can the citizens be and under what conditions can their actions thrive?
- Who should spearhead the struggles against corruption and under what conditions?
- Does context matter? Do citizens matter? Who else and what else matters? and under what conditions?

Therefore, this article is significant because it informs policy (on corruption and Governance), practice (Government technocrats, politicians and others in terms of their (re)-actions), as well as the forms of citizen participation and actions possible under given conditions – the context.

Methodology

This article is based on secondary sources of data. These sources consisted mainly of academic journals which covered issues of corruption. The secondary sources utilized in this article were found to be adequate to characterise corruption and its manifestations and enabled the surfacing of a good governance model which embodies their antithetic properties. Of equal importance was the treatment of the notion of active citizenship and participation which also used secondary data.

Literature Review

Corruption: a characterisation

For Mauro, the term "corruption" represents "the abuse of public office for private gain", while for Amoako (in Kyambalesa 2006: 105) corruption is "the antithesis of accountability and transparency". Two scales of corruption are identified in extant literature, petty and grand corruption. Dike (in Kyambalesa 2006) termed the former, "corruption of need" characterized by such practices as payment of a bribe to a policeman a traffic infringement or bribing an immigration officer to cross the border of a country as they try to make ends meet especially when salaries do not meet day to day expenses. The latter was termed "corruption of greed" in which public servants and leaders who have incomes and properties which are more than enough to meet their daily and future needs engage in practices for self-enrichment and wealth accumulation through flouting of tender laws and regulations and giving tax allowances to undeserving people and so forth. This may include or be associated with fraud, extortion and embezzlement (Kyambalesa, 2006). van der Merwe (2006: 43) argues that corruption is supply-driven when initiated by civil servants and demand-driven when initiated by private citizens.

In order to measure corruption, Transparency International developed the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) which assesses perceptions of corruption across countries; the Bribe-Payers Index (BPI),

which looks at the disposition of transnational companies and/or their executives to pay bribes to civil servants in foreign countries; and the Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), which measures attitudes and experiences of corruption among public citizens through a poll in a given country (Kyambalesa, 2006: 106).

Pillay (in Kroukamp, 2006: 208) argues that corruption in the case of South Africa is a result of 'entrepreneurial politics', bureaucratization coupled with excessive discretion and inadequate controls which breeds 'inefficiency, mistrust of the government by the citizens, waste of public resources, injustice, discouragement of enterprise' and so forth. For van der Merwe (2006: 37) the causes of corruption in South Africa include 'poor checks and balances; greed; lack of ethics; poor salaries; politicization of the public service; inefficient management; poor education/training of officials; culture of paternalism; lack of trust by officials in colleagues; and public apathy. He also argues that bribery, theft, fraud are commonest forms of corruption experienced in the civil service of South Africa especially affecting departments such as Transport, Housing, South African Police Service, Public Works, Education and Health (van der Merwe (2006: 34). Tanzi and Dike (as cited in Kyambalesa, 2006: 106) observed that corruption is prevalent in all countries whether 'developed or developing, large or small, and market-oriented or otherwise' and as such 'the scourge is not peculiar to any continent, region, ethnic group, or religious denomination'.

The same views are also shared by Transparency International, who maintain that 'no culture or society sanctions the abuse of power for personal gain or the siphoning off of public resources into private pockets'. (Kyambalesa, 2006: 106). The late Julius Nyerere is cited as having said: 'Good wages or salaries will not stop bad people from being corrupt; but miserable wages and salaries are not conducive to rectitude'. Kaufmann et al (as cited in Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2007) argue that corruption is widespread in developing countries is a result of widespread poverty and a paucity of strong watchdog agencies. Ariu & Squicciarini (2013: 504) observe that skilled people abandon their own countries to those where jobs are secured based on merit characterized by skillfulness and performance and therefore meritocratic; while expatriates shun countries where prestigious jobs are secured through nepotism, connections, string-pulling and political affiliations. They argue that in the long term, the effects are profound as reflected in the erosion of human capital, a net deficit of skills, reduced productivity and resultant deterioration in economic conditions (Ariu & Squicciarini, 2013: 504). Given such a backdrop, countries in Africa who suffer the scourge have been unable to tap into their abundant resources for the benefit of their citizens leading to unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, disease, crime and lawlessness (Kyambalesa, 2006: 107). The effects of corruption are, by and large, profound as it stifles investment, tarnishes the country's image as well as that of its citizens and is a threat to both social justice and sustainable development.

Kyambalesa (2006: 113) argues that to curb corruption there is need for good governance, zero tolerance attitude to corruption, a trim civil service, decent pay to public servants, compulsory ethics education as well as the provision of anti-corruption hotlines. The UNDP includes citizen participation

as one of the key ingredients. After this exposition of corruption and it impact, the next section looks active citizenship and participation.

Active citizenry and public participation

Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti (1993 in Schachter 2011: 704) defined participation as 'trust, norms, and networks, which can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions'. Marinetto M (2003: 104) argues that 'the genealogical approach, based on Foucault's explorations of govern-mentality, makes the point that community involvement is an effective means of social regulation'. Brannan et al., (2006: 993) are of the view that active citizenship is concerned with the notions of citizenship, community and empowerment with associated 'presumed intrinsic benefits' emanating from citizen participation in decision-making: Stoker, (cited in Brannan et al., 2006: 993) argues that participation must be have a purpose to involve communities to make their places better for all who live in them. In the polity of a more active citizenry, Irvin and Stansbury (2004, in Schachter 2011: 703) argue that 'with citizen participation the issue is not "how to" but "whether to at all.'

The world of the civic comes with rights and responsibilities and as such active citizenship demands involvement in both social and political action. (Brannan et al., 2006: 996). Murphy & Cunningham (cited in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 93) argue that igniting resident participation in activities of a civil nature which concern the neighborhood represents the 'lifeblood of urban renewal' to which Foster-Fishman et al., (2007) add that community-building initiatives should encourage the participation of residents because they are 'the drivers of the change process'.

Brannan et al., (2006: 995) define social capital as 'the social glue—the networks of ties, information, trust and norms—that binds people and enables them to co-operate more effectively' and argue that successful economies and societies have grown on the basis of their strong social, financial, physical and human capitals. According to Brannan et al., (2006: 995), social capital benefits the participants of which there are two variants of social capital, namely, bonding and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital are shared ties in communities of the same economic and social status. Bridging social capital is important to policy makers because it is about connecting social groups and divides (Brannan et al., 2006: 995). However, Putnam argues that diversity limits the formation of social capital as this challenges policy proposals which aim at building social capital (Brannan et al., 2006: 995). Work-centred lives, migration and the growing reliance on multimedia sources for entertainment are weakening the social glue and as a result are leading to a decline in social capital (Brannan et al., 2006: 996).

Foster-Fishman et al., (2007) maintain that hope for a better future, capacity to bring about change as represented by strong social ties and neighborhood leadership; and the nature and magnitude of problems in the neighborhood were strong correlates of residents'involvement in individual and collective action. Traynor, (cited in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007:93) is of the view that the involvement of residents is crucial to bring about sustainable change. Foster-Fishman, Nowell, Siebold, & Deacon

(cited in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 93) observe that citizens typically engage at three levels, namely, (a) in governance including planning and decision-making; (b) in neighborhood improvement projects and (3) mass mobilization. It is in these efforts that neighbourhood cohesion resides. According to Tocqueville (2004 in Schachter 2011: 704), 'participation in voluntary associations is the force that would keep centralized tyranny at bay'. It is in the same efforts that this neighbourhood cohesion should be tapped in the fight against corruption. Residents or citizens have been characterized as both the lifeblood and drivers of change which encompasses urban renewal. This brings credence to calls for their active involvement in matters that affect them. As such, their actions should be pro-active rather than reactive. Therefore, it is pertinent to unpack the factors which impede or galvanise residents to participate in civic matters affecting their communities.

Impediments to participation

Sampson, Morenoff, & Gannon-Rowley (in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 93) observe that entrenched problems in neighbourhoods and neighbourhood conditions also make it extremely difficult for citizen participation due to weakened social ties and 'low collective efficacy'). Coupled with unfulfilled promises made by outsiders in earlier initiatives, this makes residents reluctant to participate in new initiatives (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 93). It can also be inferred that deep societal problems have the potential to weaken social cohesion. Brannan et al., (2006: 1003) argues that people are less likely to get involved in projects which attempt to solve anti-social behaviour if there are chances to 'free-ride' and in a private cost benefit analysis the costs outweigh the benefits of participation especially when they feel no one else cares, hence the need for incentive-based schemes so that they will find some benefits in participation. These observations imply that while common problems can unite citizens, they also have the potential to dent that unity due to hopelessness in which the free-rider syndrome has equal effect.

Korbin & Coulton (in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 96) observe, with reference to crime, that a major reason why residents shun community action is because of fear of reprisals. Social disorder leads to withdrawal by community members from community life and this disorder is construed by criminals as fertile ground for more crime because chances of it being reported are slim (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 96). In terms of 'broken windows theory, signs of disorder promote crime and subsequently further disorder in a downward spiral of neighborhood decay' (Wilson & Kelling,in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 96). I postulate a corruption acceptance theory which states that chronic prevalence of corruption conditions residents/citizens to accept corruption and this in turn leads to its perpetuation.

Attrition and burnout in residents may also result and therefore sustaining interest for action is not easy (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 96). Sears and Hughes (cited in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 105) observes that different forms of participation invoke different types of people who are not interested in participating in certain forms of community action including governance, evaluation or programming decisions. It can be inferred that people are indifferent to certain causes and willing to participate in others depending on their individual appetite for collective action and the cause.

Factors in support of citizen participation

Neihbourhood conditions refer to neighbourhood capacity (for action), neighbourhood readiness (for change) and neighbourhood problems (Price & Behrens in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 93). Community capacity is 'the interaction of human, organization, and social capital existing within a given community that can be leveraged to solve collective problems and improve or maintain the well-being of that community' (Chaskin in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 94). For Felix, & Dorsey (in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 94), capacity includes skills, knowledge, relationships, structures, processes, leadership and resources for community mobilization for action/change. Garkovich (in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 94) gives prominence to local leadership and social networks/ties as enhancing community capacity to mobilise. By inference, the fight against corruption requires strong local leadership and equally strong social ties.

Cantillon, Davidson & Schweitzer (cited in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 94) maintain that social ties are characterized by the level of interactions in the neighbourhood and have a bearing on how communities share resources including favours; and how they develop trust, shared values, exchange information and cultivate social control albeit informally. Local leadership is important in the identification of societal problems and the mobilization of citizens (Norton et al., in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 94). This leadership emanates from neighborhood-based formal organizations including faith-based institutions as well as from informal associations (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 94). According to Brannan et al., (2006: 1001), argues that faith-based groups with their values and identities can bring together citizens to participate in activities in their communities because they offer 'long-term local commitment, perspective and presence' and policy-makers can leverage these groups in 'remoralising' public life and for the promotion of social cohesion based on common values (Brannan et al., 2006: 1002).

For Foster-Fishman et al., (2007: 95) community readiness encapsulates the belief in the necessity for change, its feasibility, desirability and prospects for success. Drawing from self-efficacy of Bandura, (1986), Sampson et al., (cited in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 98) define collective efficacy as 'social cohesion among neighbors combined with their willingness to intervene on behalf of the common good' while for Perkins & Long, (in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 98) it is 'trust in the effectiveness of organized community action'. Sampson et al, (cited in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 98) also found that 'communities with higher levels of collective efficacy experienced lower violence rates'. This implies community readiness for change as well as collective efficacy are important elements for collective action. It can be deduced that the fight against corruption should emanate from discomfort with the status quo within the community championed by the vanguards of the community (that is, their leadership) drawn from within their formal and informal organisations.

Hope for change

Hanna (in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 98) argues that hope for a better life is strongly associated with individuals taking action to improve their lot. Therefore, hopelessness can lead to apathy and

ultimately to inaction. March & Olsen (1995 in Schachter HL (2011: 715), argue that participation depends on 'how various institutions in a given polity condition people to see their right to a role as participants' because individuals and groups in a given political space, as informed by 'identities' created by existing institutions and processes, can take action if those circumstances permit such action. It can be inferred that institutions and processes do matter.

Neighbourhood problems

Perkins et al., (in Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 96) argues that neighborhood problems may lead to citizen participation in voluntary organizations and thus problems can either motivate or demotivate individual and/or collective action. According to Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 102) neighborhood conditions do MATTER and inform whether an individual resorts to individual or collective action. 'While we found that perceptions of neighborhood problems was the strongest predictor of whether an individual became involved at all, we found that perceived strength of neighborhood leadership was one of the strongest predictors of how active an individual was (low versus high involvement)' (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 102).

Therefore, the motives for inaction to action by individuals may be different from what makes them to become engaged residents in their communities but social ties mattered in the transition by individuals from inaction to action (Foster-Fishman et al., 2007: 103). Therefore, in a fragmented community, the space for action is constrained because of weak social cohesion. Neighbourhood conditions and social ties can inform decisions by individuals whether or to participate in individual or collective action.

Benefits of public participation

Burton (2003 cited in Brannan et al., 2006: 995) argues that there are four types of benefits which accrue to individuals when they engage in public participation: that individuals can have their interests addressed via participation (instrumentalist); that participation leads to collective public interest (communitarian); that participation allows citizens to learn more about policy (educative); that participation allows the individual to express their political identity (expressive). Intrinsic benefits of participation include 'personal feelings of inclusion and self-esteem' (Burton et al., 2004 cited in Brannan et al., 2006: 995)); capacity development (Barnes, 1999 in Brannan et al., 2006: 995)); and 'generating innovative ideas' (Dibben and Bartlett, 2001 cited in Brannan et al., 2006: 995) As such intrinsic benefits are earned when individuals participate and instrumental benefits are 'those which impact on outcomes' (Brannan et al., 2006: 995). For Fiorina (1999 in Schachter 2011: 703) civic participation can yield healthy outcomes 'when those actively engaged represent the values of the entire community'.

Schachter HL (2011: 708) argues that an individual needs resources such as 'money, time, and communication and organizational skills' to be able to participate including speaking, writing and

ability to organize meetings but disposable money and disposable time favour people of higher socioeconomic groups/status. The next section looks at the notion of governance.

Governance

Brannan et al., (2006: 994) argue that the concept of the civic goes beyond the state and the market by asking people to assume both individual and community responsibilities by not merely asserting their rights which may go against concepts of individual choice and self-determination. Brannan et al., (2006: 994) argue that 'The world of governing has seen a revolution expressed in a shift from government to governance' in which stakeholders such as the state, NGOs, private organisations and individuals come into partnerships to solve problems in new ways. Maloney et al. (2000 in Marinetto 2003: 105) argue that 'there is an interdependency, or interpénétration between civil society and the state'. This implies that there should be a symbiotic relationship between institutions.

Pierre and Peters (2000 cited in Brannan et al., 2006: 994) are of the view that governance is about the 'state learning to steer society in new ways ...emerging through the development of complex networks and the rise of more bottom—up approaches to decision-making'. While for Bang, (2003 cited in Brannan et al., 2006: 995) 'governance is a process of political communication in which both governors and governed negotiate a way forward,' for Donahue and Nye, (2002 in Brannan et al., 2006: 995) it is about 'public management through contracts' and for Newman (2001 in Brannan et al., 2006: 995) it concerns an 'increase in use of networks'. Governance is about learning to steer in complex networks, as it is about communication and negotiating future action through contracts between the governors and the governed via a process of public management.

Brannan et al., (2006: 999) applauds the introduction of 'citizenship education' in secondary schools in the United Kingdom covering 'social responsibility, community involvement and political literacy' in order to mould citizens who 'who live by the values associated with citizenship. Brannan et al., (2006: 1000) argues that this behoves upon local authorities in the UK to capacitate communities with skills to build confidence, resources and time for citizen participation in the form of 'civic education' to ensure that citizen effectively participate in democratic processes (Brannan et al., 2006: 1000). Schachter (2011: 704) argues that to have an engaged citizenry requires that the polity has effective agencies to teach civic education. This implies that institutional capacity and culture should change to be able to engage citizens productively and may require extensive staff training (Brannan et al., 2006: 1000). This entails balancing of moral outlooks as well as private costs and benefits (Brannan et al., 2006: 1001).

Discussion

Corruption is a curse which needs to be addressed given its profound costs to society. These costs could be of a socio-economic, political and psychological nature. The fight against should be waged by citizens. While citizenship comes with rights and responsibilities, it should be undergirded by active

participation in a purposeful and purposive manner. As such participation may mean sacrificing individual values for the common good.

As the lifeblood of individual and collective action, citizens should be pro-actively engaged in matters that affect them. Neighbourhood cohesion is important in the fight against corruption or the common good. While I postulated a corruption acceptance theory which states that chronic prevalence of corruption conditions residents/citizens to accept corruption and this in turn leads to its perpetuation, this should not paralyse both individuals and communities to inaction against the scourge given its detrimental effect on the moral fibre and advancement of society.

Common societal problems have the potential to unite citizens. They also have the inherent potential to destabilise unity in the community due to hopelessness and the free-rider syndrome. Therefore, participation requires that individuals and the collective envision earning benefits following private or collective cost-benefit analyses. If the costs are greater than the benefits, individuals or collective action are threatened. Calls for using incentive schemes could be the answer in the fight against corruption. The fight against corruption equally requires strong local leadership and strong social ties because these elements are crucial for social mobilization. It should be noted that people are inclined to participate in different causes based on individual appetite for collective action. Therefore, not everyone will be drawn into 'collective action'. However, community readiness for change and collective efficacy remain crucial for collective action. The more they are present, the likelihood of collective action to take place led by the local leadership from either formal or informal organisations. While literature supports coalescing community around faith-based organisations in which policymakers support their leadership in the pursuit of a common fight against corruption based on faithgrounded values, this can happen only if the policy makers have the political will to fight the scourge and if there are upright and honest against corruption. If they are corrupt themselves, they will not be concerned with societal 'remoralising'.

What matters?

Corruption should matter to galvanise action. Why do people not fight for the eradication of corruption in their midst? It can be argued that because corruption is experienced at the individual level, this makes collective action difficult to attain. Such fragmentation may result in collective inaction. Furthermore, some people are less inclined to be involved in all forms of collective or individual action. Hopelessness and apathy also contribute to inaction. It can be surmised that individual and collective 'personalities and attitudes' do matter.

Institutions and the processes and systems which they create do matter in abetting or stifling individual of collective action. Neighbourhood conditions and social ties do matter because they ignite or not ignite individual or collective action. Harnessing these forces of change may bring about positive change through collective action. Additionally, time, money and apposite skills do matter for public participation in whose absence participation is threatened.

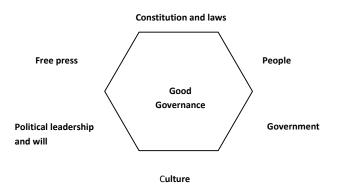
Interdependency. This implies that there should be a symbiotic relationship between these institutions. A symbiotic relationship between stakeholders therefore matters because the state's capacity is as good as the capacity of its partners. Table 1 below show the critical elements necessary to fight corruption and those which allow citizen participation. In the fight against corruption, for example, political will and leadership; a Constitution, a free press and a respectable Government are critical. For participation, purpose, strong social capital, culture, leadership, resources (of time, skills and money) and hope are very important. The list is not exhaustive.

Table 1: Critical elements necessary to fight corruption and for participation

To fight corruption	For participation
Government	People and purpose
Political and leadership will	Culture Literature reveals that corruption, for example, in SA is conditioned by values and attitudes, experience and political history. (van de Merwe 2006)
Free press	Social capital and hope
Constitution and laws	A common problem, leadership, institutions, systems and processes for participation

Towards the Good Governance Hexagon

In this section, I present the good governance hexagon (see Fig 1 below). It posits that for good governance to prevail, the following elements are necessary: a virtuous Constitution which protects the rights of citizens; a respectable Government characterized by an independent judiciary, and astute legal system including a parliament which exercises its oversight role with effectiveness as well as a well capacitated and trim bureaucracy; upright people characterized by a civil society with



capacity and readiness to take action against corruption; a noble culture which loathes corruption; political will and leadership directed towards addressing corruption; and a free press to expose incidences of corruption, mal-administration and so forth.

Conclusion

This article examined corruption and reflected on its manifestations, its causes, its effects and so forth. Two scales of corruption were identified in literature, petty (corruption of need) and grand corruption (corruption of greed). It also looked at indices which assess perceptions of corruption and others which measure attitudes and experiences of corruption among citizens. The effects of corruption were found to be profound because it stifles both local and foreign investment, tarnishes the country's image, and threatens both social justice and sustainable development. I also postulated a corruption acceptance theory which should be disobeyed in the best interest of society.

It also looked at active citizenship and the notion of participation. Active citizenship is about community, social cohesion, individual and collective decision-making, individual and collective action for the betterment of all who live in that community. Collective action requires strong local leadership and strong social ties to build community capacity for action. Collective action must promise more benefits over costs in a cost-benefits analysis in order to ensure citizen participation. Weak social ties and low collective efficacy dissuade participation. Skills, structures, systems, processes, knowledge, relationships, resources and leadership are critical for participation. Two questions still remain: Can faith and public policy mix happily with one another? Can anti-corruption be government-led? Or NGO led? Private sector led? Or can it be pursued through collective action, in whatever form it takes? Which form is ideal? These questions are a subject of further research.

It is pertinent to end this article with these perceptive words:

Generating civicness is perceived as a panacea for numerous previously intractable social, economic and political problems: social exclusion, community cohesion, crime, democratic deficit, political apathy and disillusionment, and unresponsive and underperforming public services. Evoking such concepts legitimises policies and programmes while devolving responsibility to citizens, thereby reducing costs and ensuring ownership which is central to success—or perceived success. (Brannan et al., 2006: 1005).

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