

## Attributes of the Humanist Director: The Exercise of Virtues as a Possible Scenario for the Constitution of the Humanist Enterprise

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### Abstract

In this article an introduction is made to the analysis of the humanistic attributes that the managerial manager should have, in his intentions to humanize the company, from the practice of the virtues associated with work -as causal factors-, fundamental to direct a socially responsible humanist company. For this purpose, re makes an introduction to the literature on the anthropology of the organization and the manager, as well as to the Thomistic categories of the virtues; to the anthropological approaches of the manager from Pérez and Chinchilla, and to the complementary views of other authors, which allow us to understand the constitutive dynamics of the humanist enterprise.

**Keywords:** Director; Virtues; Humanist enterprise; Attributes.



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### 1. Introduction

A brief introduction is made to the human virtues that should be contained by the humanistic business manager, in their intentions of forming humanist companies, which consider the collaborator as the center of their productive activity and as maximum impact of their social responsibility. It is not about distorting the legitimate intention of achieving the highest possible return on investment and operation, on the contrary, it is about emancipating the human being as the protagonist of corporate effectiveness in organizations. For this purpose, the business humanist approaches of Pérez (2006) and Chinchilla and Pérez (2001) are mainly addressed. The Thomistic categories of human virtues and the conceptualizations that on the other virtues of the director have been established in the business sphere. The methodology of analysis -of theoretical order-, aims to establish how human virtues and virtues associated with work constitute the potential of *knowledge to be* required by a manager, in addition to their technical and professional skills, generally ordered in the theoretical-practical dimension.

### 2. State of the Question: The Company as an Anthropological Reality

The organization is a human accomplishment that responds to the social nature of the human being, which arises as a response to the need of adaptation to the environment that people have that, by themselves and individually, could hardly survive (López, 2015). The social nature of the non-human being implies the construction of relations of cooperation, association and articulation, which, articulated, supposes the direction and delegation of tasks, what could be called an organization.

In this line the organization is more than the action of organizing, it is a final action that combines a common interest: that of producing well: "human organization arises from the very nature of the human person as a social being. Its realization in the exercise of freedom moves them to the formation of society through the organization of it. The society is established from organized people. Organizations are institutions with particular identities that share the very purpose of the person who is producing well for himself and for others" (López, 2015). Beyond the relativization of this, the ultimate purpose of the organization is the common good of its members. According to Pérez (2006), organizations are groups of people who have a common end goal, be it a group of friends with the desire to have fun, as well as a group of shareholders and workers with a clear objective of generating economic returns.

Additionally, March and Simon (1987), conceive that organizations are fundamental in society, given that most of people's lives are in permanent relationship with them. In our time, and in the business organization, this good has been typified by the profitability of money (Mintzberg, 2007). However, in socially responsible organizations, this profitability is also expressed in the welfare that the operation of the company produces in workers. It is noticed that not necessarily the distribution in money or in kind is given in an equal way, given that the members contribute a different effort, who contributes more, in justice, receives more. This is the case of investors or shareholders, who put the initial capital at the disposal of a certain project for the company to be carried out. Also who contributes more knowledge, receives more; and who does not add value to their contribution, will receive less retribution. From the Marxist approach, this behavior is unjust, and is characteristic of the accumulation of capital, which in its exercise

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generates the division of social classes and their corresponding struggle for ownership of it [Marx \(1973\)](#). [Arendt \(1971\)](#) will find this fight as the center of the dispute for the power of human society, dynamic that characterizes, among others, the political, economic and social confrontation of our time.

[Weber \(1905\)](#), states the obtaining of money as the main objective of life for the capitalist spirits. With this object, the work will be the use of the profession with the purpose of obtaining money but not the means to do it. In this line, rationality will be the work that yearns for and seeks the best way to obtain the greatest amount of wealth. While austerity, according to [Weber](#), will be the lowest possible consumption of the obtained wealth, therefore, an increase in capital is encouraged through savings.

By nature, man aspires to a transcendent life. [Weber](#) argues that in the world should disappear the exaggerated desire to amass goods and money, and avoid laziness, also says that ethics allows individuals the free and rational exercise of their profession, the proper use of time and the accumulation of wealth, not for temporary purposes, but for their ultimate happiness ([Aristóteles, 2003](#)).

It is deduced that the organization is more than a coordination of internal actions in order to produce a good or service, or that the mere formal relationship between the resources it needs and the results it can obtain, so that not any kind of informal organization would be recognized. According to [Pérez \(2006\)](#), this vision of the organization is very partial, which only looks for extrinsic results, which would be those that respond only to impositions of the social and economic environment, in which only the extrinsic motivation of the people would be needed. the achievement of a certain reward. Although these visions of the organization may be incomplete, it seems to be the prevailing paradigm of contemporary organizational style ([Tapscott, 1995](#)).

On the way to the understanding of the organization, some scholars have established differences among the organizations themselves, [Chinchilla and Pérez \(2001\)](#), summarizes a large part of [Pérez's](#) conceptualization, to describe the different types of organizations according to their purpose, in three categories : mechanistic, psycho-sociological and anthropological. [Marín and García \(2002\)](#) ordered according to their social function: family, political, economic, religious, military, etc., likewise you could find different types of typing according to the intentionality of the ordering. For example, in the legal order it is common to find the classification "for profit" and "non-profit" ([Melé, 2015](#)). For this purpose, it is taken from the multiplicity of classifications of the organizations, from the view of the Classical school of Administration, to the "company", as a productive unit oriented to the production of goods and services ([Taylor and Fayol, 1961](#)) with a profitable purpose based on efficiency and effectiveness ([Barnard, 1959](#)) in the rationalization of its resources ([Weber, 1997](#)). However, from the humanist approach, which considers the company as a human reality, [Pérez's](#) conceptualization of contemporary organization is appropriate.

[Pérez \(2006\)](#) broadens the functionalist vision of the mechanical model, conceiving the organization as a social organism that must additionally look after the interests of the human beings that are part of the company. Therefore, it must seek not only to satisfy extrinsic needs, but intrinsic needs of the workers and all its members. So that the results sought in this model are intrinsic in nature, the same that are described as changes that occur within the individual. It seeks to motivate these results through the intrinsic convictions of people, which makes it easier for a person to perform a task for their own motivation and receive gratification for the learning received, for the satisfaction of achievement, or for the sense of responsibility, etc., to what [Chinchilla and Pérez \(2001\)](#) points out as the aims of organizations: efficiency and attractiveness. In such a way, that the ideal model to conceive a humanistic company is of the Anthropological type, proposed by [Pérez \(2006\)](#), who interprets the organization as an Institution, which looks after the degree of future satisfaction of its collaborators. In this sense, the humanist institution, not only seeks efficiency and attractiveness but also unity and identification, in which it is proposed to give meaning to all human activity in business, in that it embodies a set of transcendent values that contribute to the dignification of human life ([Pérez, 2006](#)).

The humanist company then seeks transcendental results, the same ones that translate into changes in the context of the company. This joint result is then motivated by that force that moves us to a transcendent life, and that has an effect on satisfying the needs of other people, which could be called transcendental motivations.

In the sphere of the company, the organization of the same, has been marked by different approaches or ways of conceiving your organization. Thus the Classical School of Administration focused on the processes of functional productivity, from the organization, planning, direction and control, [Taylor and Fayol \(1961\)](#), [Weber \(1997\)](#), [Barnard \(1959\)](#); meanwhile, the Humanist School, focused on the needs of workers and the humanization of work, [Mayo \(1972\)](#), [Maslow \(1988\)](#), [McGregor \(1960\)](#); the Systemic School, in the systemic relations of the different parts of the organizations ([Lawrence, 1973](#)), and the School of the Contingency; who emphasized the sudden and short-term changes of the business environment [Porter \(2006\)](#), [Drucker \(1995\)](#), [Ouchi \(1982\)](#), [Senge \(1993\)](#), [Fukuyama \(2000\)](#). However, it seems that all these remain valid, in that they are apparently used in one way or another by the directions of the companies, a subject that we will deal with in the next section.

### 3. Virtues of the Humanist Director

To direct business organizations, it is clear that it is necessary to organize the work of people from the configuration of departments, areas or nodes, according to the approach that determines the direction of the company by functions: production, finance, sales and marketing, communication, people management, systems, etc. ([Winter et al., 2007](#)). Likewise, for the operation of this it requires financial resources in cash or in kind, raw materials, machinery, intellectual capital, among others, and fundamentally a market where to sell your products or services. All within the framework of political, economic and social contexts that determine the strategies of operation ([Becker and Huselid, 2006](#)). In this sense, the management of the company is a complex activity that interrelates and

coordinates a number of elements that ultimately intervene in the effectiveness of institutional purposes or, on the contrary, can be determining factors in the failure of the organization.

In this line, it is noted that the director of the company must be equipped with a series of professional and technical skills<sup>1</sup> that allow you to conduct all the elements involved in the configuration of the company towards compliance with the corporate objectives initially proposed.

Professional competences could be read from knowledge (theoretical knowledge), know-how (practical knowledge), know how to be (ethical knowledge). The knowledge, supposes the capacities or potentialities that on the discipline of the administration of companies a manager must know; the know-how, would suppose the skills and practical abilities in the different fields of the administration; and knowing how to be, frames the ethical behavior that must be assumed in each of its actions.

However, these competencies by themselves do not guarantee the efficient exercise of the business director, a situation widely evidenced in the specialized literature that gathers the experiences of corruption in the public and private business sector, and in which it is noted that the main attributes of who exercises the direction, are not their levels of knowledge, but their human behavior in order to social values and personal virtues.

From the point of view discussed here, the virtues order the values, so the analysis reference is made on the virtues required by the business manager, which could mean that as a consequence values are developed in the same director.

The virtues are those good operating habits that people acquire voluntarily and rationally. This supposes the exercise of responsible freedom and that conditions its exercise to the continuous improvement of the subject, consequently, with the perfectible nature of the human being (Yepes, 1996). It also supposes that virtue is cultivated, that is to say, that although it is possessed, it is in permanent growth -it is being-, it is not a finished action. For example: a person is usually punctual, and it is expected not only to remain punctual, but to be more punctual in the future.

In the philosophical conception of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, the virtues are of theological character and cardinal virtues. From these are taken, for the present analysis, the cardinal virtues, namely: justice, prudence, temperance and strength<sup>2</sup>; in accordance with other virtues traditionally demanded of directors, such as order, honesty, punctuality, compliance, tenacity, audacity and sincerity<sup>3</sup>.

These virtues together, added to the professional and technical skills form a comprehensive corpus of skills that should be owned by the integral manager, as a duty of the business director. To understand this assumption, the virtues and competencies are related below with the different dimensions of the company: efficiency, capacity and unity. The effectiveness dimension is correlated with knowing what to do. The tasks and functions of the manager must be carried out - for the fulfillment of objectives - with effectiveness. This refers to the fulfillment of personal and corporate objectives (efficiency-effectiveness), this dimension involves the deployment of the virtues of strength and tenacity and professional and technical skills. The unit dimension constitutes the articulation of the organizational culture with the personal culture of each collaborator. In this scenario, the worker feels identified with institutional purposes, and the company considers its employees as participating members of its exercise. In this dynamic, the director is the protagonist in the decisions made in the organization, aimed at achieving the commitment of the members and the responsibility of the organization, for which the deployment of justice, prudence, order, will be indispensable. compliance, honesty and sincerity. On the other hand, knowing how to operate is related to the strategic, analytical and operational dimensions of the company, in which the director displays all the previous virtues, but mainly, the virtues of order, compliance and punctuality, every time that, in the fulfillment of the budgeted times and resources, of the goals and tasks, the indicators that give an account of the effective management of the director can be evidenced. It is a question, then, not only of fulfilling their work, but of making all the collaborators comply with their specific works, a complex scenario, if one considers that the variable is precisely the human condition (Melendro, 1992).

In this line, the virtue of order in the manager is fundamental, insofar as the personal order must live, that is, the coherence of life, generate order in the company, through its managerial work, and in turn, order work, the functions and tasks of the collaborators of the organization. This dynamic generates what Llano calls the principles of authority.

The virtuous exercise of the manager, supposes the promotion of the authenticity of his collaborators. The officials of an organization as well as its directors have to solve specific problems by means of an address that promotes the balance between order and the right to be different, and to be authentic. As noted by Polo (1997), business management is based on the manager's ability to change a behavior. The bad manager tries to impose his mandate by force, while the good manager seeks change or action through communication, aligning the objectives of the company, seeking that these are a common reason. The adhesion of the people must be voluntary -even for their interest and initiative-, the good manager knows how to achieve this. The manager is aware that people also belong to other institutions, such as their family, their church, etc., so that people can not pursue only the objectives of the company (Melendro, 1999).

<sup>1</sup> The classification of competencies defined by the World Labor Organization is used

<sup>2</sup> From Thomas Aquinas the Thomist definitions on the cardinal virtues are, namely: justice,

<sup>3</sup> This selection of virtues is made at our own discretion, as a result of observation and teaching experience at the IDE Business School of Business at the University of Los Hemisferios, Ecuador, in the last 10 years, specifically in the interaction with the master's students.

It is then sought that the official complies with what is ordered by the management, not only by the authority of the week, but by his own conviction. It is presumed that the order must have rational content, with sense for the official, for which, the adequate fulfillment of an order will be given in the mean that it is understood and accepted. To direct is to change the behavior of another in order to an end, if the change of behavior is different from the expected, it is necessary to understand and correct this divergence. The process of direction involves ordering and achieving obedience. According to Polo (1997), it is a continuous process, where besides teaching to obey, one also has to learn to order. Training people, enhancing their skills, making the necessary corrections to officials is a continuous learning process. It is evident that, in a company with a humanist vision, the human being is the main thing. One of the priorities of the manager will be the development of his collaborators. Therefore, the managerial relationship -employee, supposes among others, an effective level of communication, the cohesion of interests and objectives, the management of the control of the actions and their respective correction, in their purposes of achieving learning and the growth of the institution.

As mentioned above, a company needs both a formal organization and an informal organization, given that the customs and beliefs in the company arise from interpersonal relationships, in the experience of the values and virtues of all members. In general, the business management of our time has been oriented on the basis of competitiveness, where competition means being better than someone else, better than the competition, better than my co-worker, better than the environment, etc. (Llano, 2010) in this regard argues that the hierarchical rise can not be the only way of development, invites a system of valuation of the person without comparing it with someone else, in which solidarity should prevail over any kind of ambition. The competition will then be constructive, when those who participate, what they really seek is the benefit for others.

#### **4. Discussion: Articulation of the Virtues of the Manager with His Functions in the Humanist Company**

Polo (1997) argues that business management is nothing more than directing men and the quality of this direction must be estimated in terms of humanity. Llano (1997) defines the management of companies as the action of influencing the behavior of others, without using coercive means, so that they channel their efforts towards the achievement of the objectives of the Institution. However, these objectives must be such that they are framed within the parameters of a humanist company. Getting people to do what the management wants is a complex ideal scenario, in which the worker is also expected to want what the director wants. This process involves a high degree of communication, not as a mere instrument, but as the means of interaction that makes it possible to share something, not just as the mere act of communicating, but the final action that contemplates that a message is communicated. In this case, both the director and the worker share the message, which could ultimately be an order, a directive, a provision, and even an instruction or training.

The virtuous director, that is to say, the one who practices the virtues, can be considered a humanistic director, in that he projects his virtue on others, teaching and demanding, through example, how his collaborators should behave, which could result in entail the generation of a humanist company. In this regard, Llano (2010) develops six parameters, which he calls the ascending values, to locate the humanist exercise of the manager in the company and its corresponding expected effect. On the one hand, the purpose of the company is seen as the mission or purpose, which have a philosophical dimension of why the company exists in a general way within our society. For the author, the conception that a manager should have about the purpose of the company, is that it should not exist with the sole purpose of generating wealth as a result of the market consumption of their goods or services, but the profits should be focused to raise the standard of living of workers and clients, in terms of seeking a benefit for society that an economic benefit (Levy, 2007). Therefore, the profits should not only be evaluated in terms of economic returns, but in terms of virtue.

Secondly, the basic human tendencies -desiderium and effusio-, in this aspect Llano (2010), determines that, traditionally, it was assumed that the only motor that moves man was the impulse to acquire, the ambition to obtain what it has not, a tendency warned by Plato as the insatiable appetite for material possessions (desiderium). Executives who only encourage this trend, create ambitious and selfish individuals who only watch over the increase of their patrimony. On the other hand, the opposite tendency would be effusiveness or effusiveness, the same that drives the human being to share what he has. Consequently, the manager must ensure that the holdings of the officials of the organization are tilted towards the effusio and that the tendency of the desiderium is given a just relevance. Knowing in this way to find the balance between the wishes of possession and the generous tendencies of delivery. The effusio usually gives potential to the organizations, the same ones that acquire an internal sense of cohesion, collaboration and disinterested solidarity. Generosity generates spirit goods such as friendship and joy that can be widely shared.

Third, with regard to the strategy of the company, the manager must coordinate and prioritize adequately the relationship between its objectives with the policies that the company should have to achieve them. In this sense, Llano argues that what is morally correct will be to seek to achieve business goals always bearing in mind and as a guide of action the pre-established internal policies. In this line, Weber (1905), argues that the behavior of man obeys two types of moral, a teleological search for results and other deontological or principles. The latter must ensure the act rather than the result. Therefore, this approach should give clarity on the principles to be followed based on a deontological moral to achieve teleological results. According to this aspect, companies that in moments of uncertainty always refer to their basic principles, subsist in a more consistent and sustainable way over time than those that only rely on the search for mere consequences or results.

The fourth parameter refers to the results or effects pursued by management and the company, and which are framed in that traditionally the company has been thrown by the environment to a short-term reality of achieving their own particular interests, without a transcendent vision of the business exercise, and in which the director can determine, based on his managerial style, the humanistic tone that allows the integration of the greatest number of workers in a culture of sustainable personal decrease and lasting over time. Llano (2010) argues that corporate interests should carry with them the general social good, within the framework of the principle of proportionality and justice.

Next, the fifth parameter establishes the scenario of the development of people, in which these should not be considered as mere means, or that are only workers who seek the payment of their work in money, or simply power or personal success as ultimate purpose. Llano (2010), follows that we cannot appeal to the development of people based only on their hierarchical or economic growth within the company. For him, there is a development alternative more aligned with the moral functioning of companies and the ethical treatment of their officials by management. Llano (2010), citing Shein, refers to a new direction of staff development based on inclusion. This address should then seek the development of the official from the vision of the sense of belonging to the company; the consolidation of cultures of participation; to arouse the appetite for motivation for inclusion, security, solidarity, friendship and service.

Finally, Llano determines as a sixth parameter the attitude of the company in the face of spontaneous impulses: man reacts naturally to all changes in his environment, these impulses resulting from the reaction can be of necessity or of urgency. These spontaneous reactions or impulses by their nature are good. However, it is also common for the individual to react in an abrupt manner to errors or other variables such as the urgency of a positive economic result. According to Llano (2010), if an organization has profits as its purpose, clearly its spontaneous impulses will react in this sense, therefore, it would be a clearly immoral system.

In the same line, Chinchilla and Pérez (2001), structure a scheme of functions or responsibilities on which the manager should seek their special attention, if its orientation is to print the humanistic seal in the company: strategic, executive and leadership. In relation to strategic functions, the director must formulate the objectives and goals of the organization, that is, what to do in general. Then, the executive functions, those that deal with the specification and the communication of the activities that have to be carried out by each person so that the organization reaches the goals and the corporate objectives, understood from the how to do the tasks. Finally, the leadership functions, which deal with the motivation of people to effectively develop their own functions and tasks, which means the purpose of the tasks.

The functions of the manager then assume the specific tasks that must be performed, which in the manner of actions must be impregnated with the permanent practice of the virtues. It would not be understood that a manager with a high strategic sense, execution and leadership, was not consistent with their virtues. According to Pérez (2006), when an organization is faced with a critical situation that endangers the integrity of the company, it is necessary for the manager to make the necessary decisions so as not to endanger the stability of the company. The decision must be generated from the full use of rationality and should always be oriented towards the good of most possible people, who constitute the organization's stakeholders: customers, shareholders, employees, local community, government, competition, consumers and suppliers, etc.

The manager in his strategic dimension and in his intention to constitute a humanistic company must discover new opportunities oriented towards the greater benefit of the same one, likewise, the capacity to innovate and manage the development of new products, and to take advantage of the opportunities derived from his negotiation skills (Armenakis and Bedeian, 1999). The executive talent of a manager includes the choice of the personnel of the organization according to their skills and what the company needs, exploits their capabilities and is responsible for distributing the activities in a way that suits each person in the organization, always having consider the weaknesses and strengths of people. For Chinchilla and Pérez (2001), the leadership of a director should fundamentally seek to maximize the capabilities of the workers, as well as the generation of belonging by all members with the company, making them feel that they are part of it. Being a leader requires personal efforts that are acquired over time. The objective of a leader is to get people to carry out their task out of conviction, and not only for the fulfillment of an order from their superiors, for the obedience that the authority of the one who orders supposes.

The action of directing involves complex actions, in which the virtues of the director become the main engine of the organizational culture. It could be supposed that from the good treatment that a director gives his collaborators, the imitations of these arise to their own companions or their subordinates. Likewise, it could be expected that, from the unjust and aggressive treatment of a manager, unfair and aggressive environments arise among the collaborators (Jun, 1980).

From the prudent and responsible exercise of the director, it could be assumed that a culture of respect and fraternity emerges, insofar as the organization could behave as a common - unit, charged with a responsible sense of all its members. As a result, a relationship could be established between the humanist company and a socially responsible company, in which people are the center and purpose of the business exercise. It is not the traditional approach of social responsibility, in which organizations direct part of their resources towards community social development programs or towards plans for protection or awareness of environmental problems (Freeman *et al.*, 1988). The social responsibility discussed here includes the fact that the same core of the business must be responsible, going through a focus on workers, based on fair wage policies, respect for diversity and different opinions, for the dignity of working hours and of work, and for the inclusion and promotion of the family of each member.

Humanizing the company supposes the exercise of strength, prudence and justice. The strength supports the decisions that the director must make in times of normality and of conjuncture, allows the collaborators to interpret the decisions of the management with clarity and security. For its part, prudence determines the size, coverage, severity and timeliness of a particular decision that the management must take. In this the collaborators observe the balanced relation between the authority and the power of the director, an imbalance between this relation could discourage the fulfillment by conviction of a certain order or directive. Additionally, the justice exercised by the director establishes the relations of reward, recognition, compensation, punishment or penalty that the management dictates to the workers. The fair or unfair action, could determine feelings of dissatisfaction, demotivation and lack of commitment of the collaborators.

Finally, and no less important is the virtue of temperance, in which the manager orders his habits towards the domination of the body's appetites. It could be decisive in terms of the coherence of life that employees expect from their superior. The non-exercise of temperance could blur the positive perception that employees have of the moral authority of the director. Without which, situations of abuse of power or corporate authoritarianism could arise. It could be assumed that the ideal correlation to determine whether an organization is humanist or not, should be considered from the responsible exercise of a humanist director and the integrity of a socially responsible company.

## 5. Conclusions

The humanist director, in addition to his professional and technical skills, should exercise himself in the cultivation of the human virtues of prudence, justice, strength and temperance, if his eagerness is to constitute a humanistic enterprise.

The human virtues in the manager must be complemented with the virtues of order, compliance, tenacity, audacity, honesty and sincerity, allowing to establish a coherent corpus of attributes in the manager, in his purpose of constituting a humanist company.

The company that needs humanist, by itself, or by the mere definition of institutional values enshrined in the principles of its organizational culture could hardly achieve its humanistic purposes without the direction of a humanist director. This relationship seems to be indissoluble, and operates as a relational symbiosis of cause and effect.

The humanist company could be a more willing scenario for the constitution of a socially responsible company, in which the humanism expressed by the director is in harmony with the needs of the organization's stakeholders. It would not be rationally argued that an organization was responsible without being humanist, or a company that says humanist is socially responsible.

The functional categories of the manager proposed by Chinchilla and Pérez, namely: strategic, executive and leadership, are presented as a relevant distributive scenario for the analysis of the different tasks that the business manager must perform in order to constitute a humanist company. It would be difficult to generate a company on a human scale, in the midst of chaos and disorder, since it would be contrary to the expectations of human intelligence and will.

The effective achievement of efficient and effective results of the company are part of the virtuous and competent exercise of the manager, as expected, the maximum exercise of their potential by shareholders, workers and other stakeholders.

## Author Contributions

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