

On College Formation of Future Lawyers' Professional Readiness to Work in Social Welfare Institutions

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ABSTRACT

In Russia today, more than ever, various social welfare institutions (Centers for social services, Social assistance centers for families and children, Rehabilitation centers for disabled children and their families, Centers for work with refugees and IDPs, Centers of medico-social rehabilitation of military men, etc.) require legal profile specialists, who are characterized by high professional culture and capable of effective advocacy. The article considers peculiarities of the lawyer's professional activity in social welfare institutions. It describes structural components, levels of formedness of the lawyer's professional readiness to work in social service. Didactic characteristics of the process of forming future lawyers' professional readiness to work in various types of social welfare institutions is given, and conditions providing efficiency of this process are experimentally proven.

KEYWORDS

Social Welfare Institutions, Legal Assistance to
Population, Professional Readiness, College Education
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Introduction

In modern society social work includes several functional areas (Basov, 2004; Holostova, 2006; Firsov & Studenova, 2006; Kulichenko, 1999; Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2006; Zhukov, 2008): social coordination, facilitative, organizational and communicative, rehabilitation, interactive and therapeutic, analytical and predictive, social-informational, preventive and human rights activities. Quality of the latest trends implementation depends greatly on the level of professional

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competence of lawyers working in the institutions (organizations) of social support, protection and welfare of citizens.

In May 2012 the decree of the Russian Federation President "On Measures to Implement State Social Policy" was published where, in particular, the Russian Government was instructed to implement a number of measures aimed at improving the quality and quantity of social services provided by social services institutions to various categories of citizens. Legal profile services were identified among these as well; in vast majority of territorial centers of social services they are provided by lawyers with secondary vocational education who graduated colleges department "Law and Social Welfare Arrangement.

According to the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia, today there are 813 colleges in Russia providing professional training "Law and Social Welfare Arrangement" (with diploma qualification after graduating the college is "a lawyer").

The basic tasks of professional activities of legal practitioners with secondary vocational education (college graduates in the above mentioned field) working in social welfare institutions as lawyers include: advising on the rights of citizens requiring social assistance and protection; drafting legal documents; participation in preparing legal acts for pension provision and social protection of citizens; execution of state authority powers on pension provision and social protection of population.

Social services lawyer, working with people, should create a microclimate of legal culture and spirituality around him, have a broad outlook and a high level of civil consciousness and responsibility, and possess qualities of a facilitator. The specific nature of legal activities in social welfare institutions requires special approach to arrangement of future specialists' professional training in conditions of college. It should result in the unity of internal, motivated, personal readiness to professional activity and practical, theoretical-methodological preparedness to it. All of the above determines the need to form professional readiness to work in various types of social welfare institutions during the period of future lawyers' study in college.

Literature Review

Changes in the Russian society over the past ten years greatly increased the requirements for professionalism, professionally relevant and socially significant personal qualities of social services specialists, including the lawyers working in social welfare institutions.

In science, there are certain prerequisites for development of theoretical and applied aspects in terms of forming professional readiness of future lawyers to work in different types of social welfare institutions.

In the works of some scientists (Gutnikov, 2001; Ivanov, 2002; Nemytina, 2015; Uporov, 1999; Vasilyev, 1996; Zhalinsky, 2009) theoretical foundations of professionographic studies of the lawyer's personality and labor activities are described. Daldaeva (2015), Denikaev (2006), Gasparyan (2014), Kosyanova (2008), Savelyev & Pusheva (2009), Zhuravlev (2008) consider methodological approaches to future legal specialists' training. Some works (Dmitriev, 2008;

Dubinina, 2014; Kigoma, 2005; Nikishina et al., 2015; Nikitina & Volkhin, 2010) present certain content and methodical aspects of professional activities of lawyers in Social Assistance Centers for families and children, Social shelters for minors, Centers for social service of population.

Professional activities of a lawyer of social welfare institution reflect not only specific human rights work as such, but also peculiarities of socio-political and socio-economic situations of modern Russian society in its contents and ways of implementation. It is clear that processes of social deviancy in the society, such as forced migration, growth of social orphanhood, unemployment, divorces, neglect of minors and others, are important determinants which identify of professional readiness formation of a social welfare institution lawyer.

In the last decade in Russian pedagogy of vocational education researches of different aspects of the problem of professional readiness formation in specialists of "assisting" professions (social workers, psychologists, social pedagogues, lawyers, health workers) to work in social welfare institutions (Fedyakina & Nikitina, 2009; Sablin, 2012; Sitnick, 2014; Turinski, 2009; Zakatova, 2009) have been intensified. However, today there are insufficient special studies that reveal specifics of the college formation of lawyers' professional readiness to work in social welfare institutions.

Methods and Data

Methodological basis of the research conducted by the authors of this article included:

- philosophical, sociological, psychological and pedagogical concepts that reveal multidimensional nature of a specialist's professional readiness to work in social sphere as an object of interdisciplinary research;
- concepts of system genesis of professional activity and professional development of specialist's personality working in the "man – man" system (Klimov, 2003; Povarenkov, 2002; Shadrnikov, 2004);
- concepts that reveal human rights protection mission of social work institute in the modern society (Firsov & Studenova, 2006; Pavlenok, 2010; Yarskaya-Smirnova, 2006).

When writing the article, the authors carried out a comparative analysis of scientific and methodical literature regarding formation and development of professional readiness of future lawyers to work in social welfare institutions; analysis of normative-legal documents regulating functions of lawyers working in social welfare institutions; generalization and synthesis of the analyzed materials.

The article summarizes long-term (2006–2016) experience of the authors on formation of college students' (future lawyers) professional readiness to work in social welfare institutions. In the college environment such methods as monitoring, including different types of surveys and questionnaires of students, content analysis of educational practice and volunteer work diaries, forming pedagogical experiment, diagnostic methods, peer-review method, students' self-evaluation of their formed professionally important skills of a social welfare institution lawyer, mathematical methods of empirical material processing were used.

At various stages of the experiment the study involved 538 students, 75 specialists of legal profile of social welfare institutions, 986 clients of social welfare institutions.

Results

The main activities of the lawyer of social welfare institutions

Theoretical understanding of phenomenology of professional readiness of a lawyer to work in social services demanded experience of legal work analysis in different types of social welfare institutions. Summarizing investigated experience of lawyers, it is possible to determine the following basic directions of their activity:

- advisory work with clients on issues of family, housing, land, labor, administrative, inheritance law;
- assistance to clients of social services with registration of the required legal documents in the employment process (this direction prevails in the employment centers of, centers for work with refugees and IDPs);
- participation in legal and socio-economic support to multi-child and low-income families;
- advisory work connected with problems of disability registration (this area of work is especially expressed in medical and rehabilitation centers for children with disabilities and their families, centers for medico-social rehabilitation of military men);
- individual and group work with minors at social risk (explanation of legislative norms, rights and duties of minors; organization of clubs "Connoisseurs of law"; organization of excursions to law enforcement agencies; legal support of minors' employment, etc.);
- work with minors' families (family counseling, assistance in legal self-education of family members; participation in procedures of custody, guardianship, adoption, termination of parental rights, restoration of rights);
- implementation of mediation technologies to establish the necessary contact of a client social welfare institution and an expert of the competent authority;
- cooperation with social partners of social welfare institutions (general education institutions, vocational education institutions; medical and Spa centers, cultural and sports institutions; law enforcement agencies; public, religious and charitable organizations).

Thus, we can conclude that work of a social welfare institution lawyer is multifunctional and includes:

- human rights protection, advisory work with clients of different age groups (elderly, adults, minors);
- multidimensional personal and business communication with representatives of various social groups (poor, disabled, unemployed, refugees, displaced people, former soldiers, etc.);
- work in multiprofessional team of specialists of social welfare institutions (cooperation with social workers, psychologists, social pedagogues, doctors, economists, etc.);

- interaction with various administrative professionals, law enforcement agencies, etc.

Consequently, professional willingness of a social sector lawyer is of a multifunctional nature.

Essence of the lawyer's professional readiness to work in social welfare institutions

Professional readiness of a lawyer (a young professional, a college graduate) to work in social welfare institutions is a synthesis of: *a*) psycho-pedagogical readiness of a young specialist (understood as an ability and skills to overcome difficulties of employment adaptation period, willingness to interact with different clients, abilities and skills to establish productive personal and business contact with colleagues); *b*) social readiness (an ability to get well-versed, self-determinate and self-realized in various spheres of social life), *c*) professional readiness (includes the available system of mastered techniques of professional advocacy and ways to arrange it; formedness of basic individual style of professional activity).

Structure of a lawyer's professional readiness to work in the social welfare establishment is a relationship of some substructures:

- *axiological substructure* (young professional's awareness of social work value in the modern society, understanding of a professional lawyer mission in social protection of population; formed harmonious system of professional and personal values);

- *professionally-cognitive substructure* (formedness of critical, systematic, logical, flexible professional legal thinking; mastery of multidimensional complex of regulatory, procedural knowledge used in human rights activities in the social sphere);

- *emotional-volitional substructure* (mastered by a lawyer skills to self-regulate his/her emotional state, communicative reactions, and professional behavior in situations of high emotional stress when interacting with clients of social services in a state of "social disaster", etc.; developed volitional qualities, discipline, responsibility, determination);

- *procedure-activity substructure* (available in a young professional initial basic experience in applying legal tools, advisory technologies, mediation to resolve human rights goals of social work).

Personal sense of student's activity in the process of forming professional readiness to work in social welfare establishments consists rather in forming individually meaningful holistic philosophy of legal activities in social welfare institutions than in reproductive mastery of professional canons.

To determine formedness levels of a lawyer's (a young specialist's) professional readiness in college graduates to work in social welfare institutions the following criteria were developed.

Motivational criterion is revealed via the following indicators: interest of a future specialist to the problem of legal activities in social welfare institutions, internal drive of an individual to be active in studying this line of human rights protection work associated with satisfaction of the need for self-realization in the professional sphere; awareness of the necessity to have multifunctional legal knowledge, skills for solving problems of social protection of population; constant

aspiration to self-educational activity in technologies of human rights protection of various social groups.

Professionally-gnostic criterion implies acquisition of legal knowledge system in various fields of law, algorithmic and heuristic technologies in human rights protection; formedness of logical, analytic-synthetic style of thinking.

Vocational and practical criterion requires productive implementation of entire spectrum of legal knowledge and skills to solve specific problems in protecting rights of social welfare institution clients in real working conditions.

Brief description of the process of forming future lawyers' professional readiness to work in social welfare establishments

Process of forming the future lawyer's professional readiness to work in social welfare establishments in college is carried out at several levels: a) forming professional readiness substructures during academic and extracurricular work; b) developing professionally important qualities of a social welfare institution lawyer; c) carrying out system analysis of primary experience in professional legal activities in social welfare institutions during periods of practice and volunteer work; d) executing delayed control over college graduates' independent professional activities in social welfare institutions.

At ascertaining stage of the experiment the initial level of students' motivation (second year of college) to work in social welfare field, the level of logical and analytical and synthetic thinking, the level of tolerance, empathy, practical skills in applying basic legal instruments to solve standard tasks of human rights activities were determined.

The forming stage of experimental work included: testing of authors' scientific and methodical recommendations for arranging future lawyers' practice in different types of social welfare institutions; approbation of authors' optional and elective courses "Lawyer's professional activity in the center for social aid to family and children", "Legal service of employment center", approbation of author's trainings for development of professional communicative culture of future lawyers in interaction with various groups of clients of social services, trainings on mastering methods and techniques of self-regulation of emotional states and professional conduct in specific (complicated) conditions of communication with clients of social welfare institutions. Individual and microgroup work with students was carried out to create positive motivational attitudes for self-development of own professional level of legal culture; and specialized work in elective disciplines and optional courses devoted to professionally important qualities of a social service lawyer and to formation of socio-psychological, socio-economic, medical, religious, gerontological, ethno-pedagogical culture of an expert. The latter components are particularly important, as a social service lawyer has to establish productive professional interaction with elderly people, people of different ethnic and religious mentality. Students also wrote term and degree thesis on the subject, providing for in-depth study of individual aspects of the problem of a lawyer's professional readiness to work in social welfare institutions. This scientific-research work of students contributed to a more detailed study and development of theoretical-methodical bases of professional activity of a social service lawyer.

Project technologies in forming future lawyers' professional readiness to work in social welfare institutions

The survey identified the most effective of students' project activity types aimed at forming professional readiness of future lawyers to work in social service:

- professional-simulation (gaming) projects (students developed the content and script of a business game, involving distribution of roles, in groups, for example, "representatives of various groups of social welfare institution clients (unemployed, pensioners, orphans, etc.)", a "social service lawyer", a "specialist of monetary benefits calculation department (allowances, compensation)", a "specialist of unemployed employment department (or minor children from multi-child families)", "social worker of a particular neighborhood", "law enforcement specialists", "attorney", "social pedagogue", "psychologist of social services", etc., in the course of a business game it was necessary to resolve specific human rights situation, to justify actions of a lawyer's professional behavior, etc.);

- information-analytical projects (students studied various methods of producing multifaceted professionally-relevant information for the social service lawyer and the ways of its processing: analysis of legal documents, computer databases, scientific-methodical and monographic literature sources, interviews with lawyers in social welfare institutions, social workers-practitioners, analysis of materials from professional journals and media, analysis, systematization, classification of legal problems of clients of social welfare institutions in a particular region, etc.; methods of professionally-relevant information presentation (report, publication, online forums, etc.);

- specialized, practice-oriented projects (as a result of this type of project, for example, students obtain a developed portfolio, which includes justification of tactics of a lawyer's human rights activities in a particular area of his work, such as protection of minors' property rights; protection of child's rights in the family; during the project presentation the ways of its implementation in the social welfare institutions are shown, external expert assessment of a project is given by specialists of social infrastructure establishments).

Role of practice and volunteer work in forming future lawyers' professional readiness to work in social welfare institutions

Implementation of the research tasks required adequate usage of various types of internship, during which students are involved in legal activities in real conditions of social welfare institutions. The main bases of internship were Centers of Social Services, Social Assistance Centers for Families and Children, Medico-social Rehabilitation Centers for Disabled Children and their Families, Centers for Medico-Social Rehabilitation of Military People, Employment Centers.

This internship was a kind of "space" of professional and social trials, when a student had an opportunity, on the one hand, to experience emotionally the results of various unpredictable situations of a lawyer's professional communication (when interacting with elderly people, unemployed, refugees, families of "social risk" group, with children who are difficult to bring up, with

administration of an institution, etc.), and, on the other, to internalize features of effective professional behavior of a social service lawyer.

The internship helped change individual attitudes of a student in relation to oneself (as to a future specialist in human rights activities sphere) and also changed individual vision of specifics of professional activity of a social welfare institution lawyer. After various internships professional training was filled with new personal meanings for many students: criteria of future lawyer's self-attitude varied intensely, the reference model of a professional lawyer changed, which had a significant impact on the process of forming professional lawyer's readiness to work in the field of social protection of population. After completion of each stage (type) of internship, the students participated in the workshop "Peculiarities of professional activity of a lawyer in social welfare institutions". At these workshops they discussed situations in which a lawyer must take a holistic approach to analysis of an individual case of a client, to exercise utmost degree of tolerance, to apply a heuristic approach to develop human rights protection strategy.

The authors of this article conducted trainings on the development of students' reflection of professional skills and competences acquired in the course of internship, with gradual increase in complexity of the analyzed systems ("trainee (in the role of paralegal of social welfare institutions) – client (as a representative of different client groups: the unemployed, retired, disabled, minor, etc.); " trainee – administration of the institution"; " trainee – client – multiprofiled expert team").

Participation of students in the activities of legal clinic "Centre for Legal Assistance to Population" was one of the types of volunteer work. The purpose of operation of this legal clinic is free professional advice on legal issues in family law, housing law, social security law and other areas. The legal clinic carries out its activities in accordance with the Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation dated November 28, 2012 No. 994 "About approval of the Procedure for creating legal clinics by educational institutions of higher professional education and their activities in non-state system of rendering free legal assistance"; Federal Law of November 21, 2011 No.324-FZ "On Free Legal Aid in the Russian Federation"; RSSU Regulation on a legal clinic "Centre for Legal Assistance to Population" (Prokhorova, 2014).

Free legal assistance to population is provided by students under the guidance of highly qualified faculty members, who have higher legal education, as a rule, many of them have scientific degrees of candidates and doctors of legal sciences, and, the most important, all the tutors supervising activities of "Center for Legal Assistance to Population" of RSSU have years of experience in the legal advice field.

Activity of the Center is aimed at providing legal information (legal advisory) assistance to citizens relating to administration of norms of civil, administrative, family, inheritance, labor, housing, criminal and social security law; introduction of clinical methods of professionally-oriented training in the educational process of Russian State Social University; providing students with necessary skills, competencies of practical work in the field of legal counselling; quality improvement of students' vocational legal training; creating conditions to promote more effective professional adaptation of future graduates, followed by integration of young specialists in professional (legal) community; creation of

conditions for productive professional and personal interaction between students and faculty members, graduates, employers, representatives of social partners of RSSU; creation of educational-methodical base for development of clinical education in RSSU and its affiliates.

It should be emphasized that "Center of Legal Assistance to Population" of RSSU is a volunteer structure that was created to improve professional competence of students, and does not aim at deriving profit. In general, work in the legal clinic is a valuable experience for RSSU students in their training for further independent professional activities.

In the periods of internship and volunteer work, students kept diaries of self-observation, where they marked successful and complicated cases of interaction with clients of social services in providing them legal assistance and pointed out which of the methodical recommendations on conducting legal consultations in social sphere institutions they performed exactly and which caused difficulties.

Discussion

At the final stage of experimental work (after the internship and defense of final qualifying work) the results of experts' evaluation (the experts were: supervisors tutoring the students' internship bases), and students' self-esteem were compared in terms of formedness of professional skills that characterize content-related basis of future lawyers' professional readiness to work in social welfare establishments (table 1).

Table 1. Results of experts' evaluation and students' self-esteem concerning to formedness of professional skills that characterize content-related basis of a lawyer's professional readiness to work in social welfare establishments (the table shows the average score on a 5-point rating scale for each skill; 5 points – the highest level of skills formation)

| Professional skills that characterize professional lawyer's willingness to work in social welfare establishments | <i>2011 Graduates (25 people)</i> | | <i>2015 Graduates (26 people)</i> | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| | Experts' evaluation | Self-esteem | Experts' evaluation | Self-esteem |
| | n | m | n | m |
| Ability to determine the main reasons of client's situation requiring for human rights activities | 4.24 | 4.73 | 4.52 | 4.67 |
| Ability to identify correctly legal norms that are violated in the client's situation and should be protected | 4.11 | 4.73 | 4.68 | 4.83 |
| Ability to establish productive personal and business contact with a client | 3.96 | 4.58 | 4.53 | 4.59 |
| Ability to work in a team, in collaboration with other specialists of social welfare institutions | 4.02 | 4.48 | 4.79 | 4.86 |
| Ability to take into account age, ethnic, social, confessional and other features of clients when interacting with them | 4.16 | 4.32 | 4.52 | 4.57 |
| Ability to execute legal documentation properly | 4.39 | 4.64 | 4.82 | 4.86 |
| Ability to define clear strategies and tactics of the required clients' behavior for a positive resolution of a legal problem | 3.98 | 4.42 | 4.55 | 4.63 |
| Ability to define clearly strategies and tactics of their behavior as a lawyer | 4.03 | 4.57 | 4.64 | 4.75 |
| Knowledge of methodology of working with juvenile offenders | 4.08 | 4.68 | 4.58 | 4.82 |
| Knowledge of methodology of working with children left without parental care | 4.05 | 4.37 | 4.62 | 4.75 |

Generalized and systematized the empirical (factual) material of the research (table 2) allowed us to distinguish the following levels of formedness of lawyers' professional readiness to work in the social welfare institutions:

- *reproductive-empirical level* (characterized by presence of initial experience of independent professional activity that has a normative-reproductive character; professional activity of a person is aimed at socio-

professional adaptation – development of system of employee relations, acquisition of basic skills to perform functional duties of a social welfare institution lawyer);

- *vocational and adaptive level* (young professional is prone to a stable personal-meaningful, holistic attitude to legal activities in the sphere of social protection of population, owns a wide range of competencies providing success in solving typical tasks of human rights activities for certain categories of social service clients, has a sufficiently high index of satisfaction with human rights activities results, however, may experience difficulties in the process of solving non-standard professional tasks which require involvement of various specialists);

- *professional-extended level* (characterized by the presence of developed analytical and reflective skills, which provide lawyer deep understanding of a customer's identity, his actions and behavior; at a high level of completeness there is ability to solve valuation and information and legal and administrative regulatory tasks; interaction with customers, colleagues is characterized by a pronounced humanistic orientation, empathy; high level of professional thinking, high degree of effectiveness of human rights activities even during complex problems resolution).

Table 2. Comparative analysis of levels of formedness of lawyers' (college graduates') professional readiness to work in social welfare institutions (in %)

| Groups | Graduation year and level* | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------------------------|-------|-------|-------------|------|------|-------------|------|------|
| | 2011 (n=25) | | | 2013 (n=25) | | | 2015 (n=25) | | |
| | REL* | PAL** | PPL** | RE | PA | PP | REL | PAL | PP |
| Graduates who studied in college (based on full 11-year course at secondary school) for 3 academic years | 14.3 | 64.2 | 21.5 | 12.4 | 61.4 | 26.2 | 8.7 | 55.7 | 37.8 |
| Graduates who studied in college (based on 9-year course at secondary school) for 4 academic years | 14.8 | 65.4 | 19.8 | 11.3 | 61.2 | 27.5 | 8.3 | 53.0 | 38.7 |

*REL – reproductive-empirical level,

**PAL – professionally-adaptive level,

***PPL – professionally-prolonged level

Data comparison of initial and final surveys revealed a positive trend in personal and professionally important characteristics which is described by the following statistically significant ($r=0.83$) changes: a) according to the results of

"Style of self-regulation" questionnaire by V.I. Morosanova, the number of students with a highly developed ability to self-regulate emotional states and behavior significantly increased from 35% (2011 year) to 52% (2015); the number of students with high level of professional tolerance to the elderly and disabled people increased from 33% (2011) to 55% in 2015 (according to V.V. Boyko test results).

Deferred monitoring of professional growth of college graduates' that were employed by lawyers in various social welfare institutions was conducted using a combination of methods: interviews, conversations with colleagues and representatives of social service administration, analysis of successful work with clients, complex of diagnostic techniques. Former participants of the experiment effectively carry out their professional activities, effectively using skills acquired during their training in college for solving problems of human rights protection work.

Conclusion

The understanding of the mission of social welfare institute in the modern world, desire for complete self-realization at work, motivated usage of personal and professional resources in human rights activities make an integrative result of forming the lawyer's professional readiness to work in the field of social protection of population. Achieving this goal is possible through the synthesis of major components of future specialist's individuality: ideological, moral and professional.

Peculiarities of the process of forming future lawyers' professional readiness to work in social sphere during their student years are closely connected with the singularity of this social and age group of young people, determined by the development and adoption of new socio-cultural and professionally-oriented functions, formation of civil maturity.

The process of forming future lawyers' professional readiness to work in social welfare institutions will be effective, completely meeting regional conditions of functioning of social welfare institution infrastructure, if: a) content and methodological basis of professional training of college students is based on scientific understanding of real legal problems of the main client groups of various types of social welfare institutions; b) mechanisms for integration of content of legal, socio-economic, psycho-pedagogical and special training of students aimed at forming professional tolerance of future lawyers working with specific contingent of clients in social welfare institutions are defined and implemented; c) involvement of students in real human rights cooperation with different categories of clients of social welfare institutions during the period of volunteer work and internship.

Simultaneous movement *from personality to profession* and *from profession to personality* is the leading idea, the conceptual basis of both analysis and solution of the problem of forming the lawyer's professional readiness to work in the field of social welfare.

The research carried out by the authors cannot be regarded as complete in terms of comprehensive disclosure of the research problem. At the same time it has helped to identify the prospects for its further development. The most relevant of them include improvement of the process of forming in college socio-psychological, gerontological, ethno-pedagogical culture of future lawyers of

social welfare institutions; studying specific professional activities of lawyers working in various social welfare institutions. The study of these and other issues would undoubtedly contribute to the improvement of professional training of legal specialists for social sphere.

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