

## Historical, collective, institutional and market memory (Development of emergent phenomena)

Janusz Dworak

*WSB University in Gdansk, Grunwaldzka 238, Gdansk, Poland*

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### Abstract

The article is of interdisciplinary nature with its emphasis laid on sociology. Its aim is to present some considerations on the way in which emergent phenomena<sup>1</sup> are created. The question whether the reasoning based on analogy fosters phenomena related to the emergence of new notions comes as the research problem that the author tries to solve. The research hypothesis is formulated as the following statement: applying analogy,<sup>2</sup> considerations which refer to historical memory allow additional notions, such as collective, institutional and market memory, to emerge. In the article, the research method applied in order to achieve the assumed aim is the grounded theory<sup>3</sup> because it allows us to generate knowledge in numerous fields. During the articulation of theoretical annotations,<sup>4</sup> new emerging notions come as a good starting point for further studies on various types of memory, and consequently, they determine their usability in practice. In the article, the annotations are placed in the footnotes and they present the author's thoughts and reflections presented by people who have been consulted with regard to the discussed problems. Presented in the theoretical part of the article, the reference to scientific achievements in the field of marketing memory is actually very difficult because they are extremely scarce.

Historical memory may be seen as knowledge resources recorded in some past stories, diaries and specialist publications; it also refers to artefacts collected in museums and to historical monuments that represent the culture of a particular society. Collective memory refers to historical awareness that is manifested by the cultivation of traditions and customs, reconstruction of buildings in which previous generations used to live. The concept of institutional memory is related to a specific vector that provides collective memory with magnitude and direction in the form of interpretation of events; it can be considered as a resultant of exogenous and endogenous processes taking place in a society. On the basis of those considerations, another type of memory appears: market memory as a new category of knowledge. The essence of market memory comes down reminding various communities about products the consumption of which is supposed to satisfy their needs at a specific level, but it will also lead to the replacement of currently operating devices with new and more advanced ones.

<sup>1</sup> The notion of emergence was introduced into the language in the second half of the 19th century by G.H. Lewes, and it comes from the Latin words *emergo*, *emergere* which obviously means *to emerge*. The notion refers to the emergence of features, configurations and behaviour of new quality that affect each other in a particular set. Another way to understand emergence refers to the creation of unpredictable phenomena that come with the complexity of the whole system. Such phenomena refer to each type of evolution, assuming that, in the course of time, new and unpredictable properties of objects emerge, and they come as a result of relations that take place amongst them and between them and their environment.

<sup>2</sup> Analogy is a method of reasoning in which the same relations are sought in different situations or the same schemes are applied to reasoning carried out under different conditions. It allows us to transfer knowledge and specific solutions from one problem to another problem or even from one field to another one.

<sup>3</sup> The grounded theory is a cohesive system of qualitative methods developed by Anselm Strauss and Barney Glaser.

<sup>4</sup> An important element of the grounded theory is writing theoretical annotations in the form of random notes made based on considerations that might be treated as some preliminary ideas to be discussed later on. The process of their articulation runs simultaneously with data collection; as a result, new notions are created and a theory appears whilst complete freedom of reasoning is maintained.

*Keywords:* historical, collective, institutional and market knowledge, emergence.

## 1 Introduction

During the pre-industrial era, a ruler was practically the only institution and he could shape his subjects' memory according to his concepts through the internal and external policy of his state. At that time, the process of describing history was taken over by chroniclers, bachelors and diarists. They recorded the history of their nations in order to provide an image of the ruler, his supporters and enemies.

The industrial era was shaped by a techno-structure that affected the way in which facts were remembered by the international community (Galbraith, 1979) and where the doctrines that actuated processes taking place in economies of various states were formed. The repeated and remembered ideas became the sources of the industrial and proletarian revolutions. *Unbelievable dynamism distinguishes the modern era from all the previous periods of time in the clearest and most obvious way* (Giddens, 2007).

During the post-industrial era, achieving prosperity became a priority; organisations used historical and collective memory to create institutional memory the task of which was to form behavioural patterns fostering consumption on a large scale.

During the post-modern era, companies have been forced to generate market memory, which means recording as much information as possible in potential customers' awareness. Such an operation should guarantee profits obtained from promotion activities that are carried out by local, regional, national and global institutions. *Actually, what we call an institution can most probably be best defined as more or less complicated set of roles* (Mills, 2007). They are going to shape the market through the repetition of shopping patterns in various circumstances.

## 2 Overview of knowledge on collective memory

Individual memory is closely related to individuals' experience, childhood, adolescence, professional work, family and achievements that are manifested by the ownership of material goods and everyday emotions.

Historical memory consists of facts that took place in the past, such as wars, resurrections, periods of prosperity and downfalls marked with life stories of kings, leaders, scientists, social activists and inventors. Its elements are viewed as artefacts, which include heroes of the past times described in texts that were published then, songs composed long ago, urban architecture, ancient cemeteries, monuments and churches. Historical memory can be supplemented by discoveries made by historians, archivists, archaeologists or diarists.<sup>5</sup>

Collective memory results from the way in which small and large communities refer to events from the past. It shapes the basis of the social existence and the way of perceiving the reality through the prism of numerous generations' history. People who are deprived of collective memory often feel alienated in their environment. Past events come as instruments applied by collective memory in order to remind current generations about images from the past, according to the prevailing ideas (Giddens, 2007). Collective memory most often emphasises only things that allow society members to identify themselves with their ancestors who are considered to be heroes. People who negatively affected the history of a nation usually sink into oblivion – *normally, the society is the place where people acquire their memories, recognise and locate them* (Halbwachs, 2008). *Hence, it is possible to state that everyone [...] has their memory which is not the same as the memory of anyone else. Nevertheless, it is a part and an aspect of collective memory* (Halbwachs, 2008). It means that collective memory is largely determined by its own individuality that has been formed by subsequent interpretations of past events.

## 3 Creation of institutional memory

Using some simplification, it is possible to state that institutional memory is the good offered to others in order to win their affection, respect and admiration.<sup>6</sup> This comes as commonly accessible knowledge about positive features and about achievements of people who have been put on a pedestal, and also the negative information diminishing the role performed by those who have been removed from that pedestal.<sup>7</sup> Sometimes institutional

<sup>5</sup> The author has based his opinion on the experience of a Siberian Deportee, W. Malinowska, the author of the memories *Zapamiętane*.

<sup>6</sup> Most companies intensify their efforts to shape their images. People who have got some spectacular achievements very often go back to those moments from the past in their memories; they keep their medals and diplomas in places where everyone can see them.

<sup>7</sup> When it was finally possible to talk loudly about crimes committed during the Stalinism era, the behaviour that had not been commented on before for safety reasons was presented as the example of heroism.

memory is reinforced by marches, defilades or manifestations.<sup>8</sup> The process of forming institutional memory is fostered by media commenting events that take place in the public space. *Actually, it is all about looking for that memory in a specific period in the past* (Halbwachs, 2008). The process related to multiplication of remembered events involves remembering reasons and results of their occurrence. *We believe that our mind replays its memories under the pressure exerted by the society* (Halbwachs, 2007).

Some people will see institutional memory as their roots; some other people will ignore it as a collection of banal stories. In some extreme cases, people are forced to remember things that they would prefer to forget.<sup>9</sup> The variety of attitudes related to institutional memory can be observed in scientific studies provided by historians and in satirical performances presented by comedians. Such dual nature sets up some barriers to communication because – depending on the place of recalling memories – they become objects of adoration for some people and a space for making negative comments for others. Institutional memory is an instrument applied in the implementation of trans-regional plans made by institutions, which is manifested in teaching history at primary and secondary schools.<sup>10</sup> In this way, young people are forced to remember their curriculum material through the prism of currently accepted values that are sometimes contradictory to their parents' views.<sup>11</sup> It is possible to observe that institutional memory stigmatises people by attributing ancestors' features to next generations. The guilt for war crimes is very often transferred onto the whole society. It refers to the information about traumatic experience of previous generations, which acquires an exceptional dimension in the process of history education. In this case, institutional memory is multiplied by narration of witnesses who directly participated in the described events.<sup>12</sup> Extending institutional memory takes place by obligatory reading lists, which include books in which authentic characters are often described by authors with vivid imagination. A plausible plot of a historical novel<sup>13</sup> is set in the framework of some past events in order to evoke particular feelings towards the characters who participate in the described events. As a result, people remember images developed based on fiction, which has very little in common with knowledge of the past. In this way, the independent evaluation of events, which has been so far provided by ordinary citizens, disappears and is replaced by controlled empathy. This is how implants of memory are created. They perform several functions; the most important of which are replacing current historical knowledge by its new interpretation<sup>14</sup> and another way of evaluating good and evil. Implants are aimed at arousing additional emotions in people, such as approval, hate, indifference, sympathy or anger.<sup>15</sup> They trigger various antagonisms in the society because some people support the previous way of describing the past and some other people become followers of new concepts that systematise current historical knowledge. It is also possible to observe a process in which common events are given a new apocalyptic dimension through providing new interpretations to the events. They are described in religious brochures and given to people in public places. Compiled freely by anonymous leaders of organisations that prophesy the onset of Armageddon, such texts trigger fear of the future and they largely contribute to a decrease in some people's entrepreneurship.<sup>16</sup>

#### 4 Institutional memory, knowledge and history

<sup>8</sup> In the era of real socialism, it involved celebrations of the 1st May with parades and defilades when the most recent achievements of the arms industry were presented.

<sup>9</sup> After the war, there were numerous films on that subject, and people who survived the war tragedy were not allowed to forget about it.

<sup>10</sup> In the years 1946–1989, history course books were focused on bourgeoisie's oppression of workers and farmers, which justified revolutionary upheavals of the oppressed.

<sup>11</sup> Therefore, children brought up in a particular religion often remained its followers till the end of their lives despite all the efforts made by pedagogues to change their beliefs. In the socialism era, Polish schools, where the Marks model of perceiving the world was popularised, did not succeed in changing the worldview of Catholic families.

<sup>12</sup> In the socialist era, ex-prisoners of Nazi concentration camps were sometimes invited to schools to talk to pupils. After the political transformation, also Siberian deportees were often invited to schools where they were asked to tell pupils about their experience.

<sup>13</sup> For example, the novels by Henryk Sienkiewicz: *Faraon*, *Quo Vadis*, *Krzyżacy*, *Trylogia* (*The Pharaoh*, *Quo Vadis*, *The Teutonic Knights*, *The Trilogy*).

<sup>14</sup> It was how Ludwik Waryński or Karol Świerczewski ceased to be heroes.

<sup>15</sup> This involves, for example, historical figures such as K. Świerczewski, J. Marchlewski, R. Luksemburg or W. I. Lenin after whom streets, squares and important industrial works were named. After the political transformation, these names were removed from history course books and objects were renamed.

<sup>16</sup> For instance, the translation of the Old and New Testaments published by *Nowy Świat* are supplemented with some words that allow readers to interpret the texts in a different way.

Placing statistics, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, physics, chemistry, economics and history in one set leads to numerous misunderstandings. Knowledge is based on repeatable and comparable experience, for example, in medicine where experiments are carried out in order to obtain data that can be transformed into information fostering the development of this branch of science. Similar to statistics, mathematics can be considered only as a tool applied to describe experiments with some universal methods of counting economic, physical, chemical and natural phenomena. History should be viewed as a chronological stream of events that has been written down and interpreted in a new way by the next generations. In history, there is no place for questionnaire form surveys, hypotheses are rarely formulated and the aim of research studies is not focused on providing solutions to problems but on recognition of reasons for particular events that are considered as important at a specific moment (Dworak, 2018). History comes as a subjective opinion on facts from the past, supported by the interpretation of life stories of some selected historical figures who are presented in the context of various events. Specific ceremonies and repeated rituals referring to history foster ascribing a serious and unique dimension to institutional memory. History wins its special status in the society because of the fact that it passes on tangible and intangible symbols of pathos to next generations. Relativism of institutional memory is manifested by the fact that a period of time in which some historical events took place is actually indifferent to it. It is possible to refer to the Middle Ages, the Age of Enlightenment, Romanticism and Positivism to make movies, film series or plays based on some insignificant episodes. Despite the fact that they came from various cultures and they lived during different time periods, historical figures still address modern generations with a current message.

In its paradigm, history does not have a way to perform measurements, there is no any uniform scale of evaluation that could guarantee objective assessment of importance of certain events. Therefore, some of them get more attention than others. In some extreme cases, we should only make our best efforts to provide generally known statements such as *history has a way of repeating itself* or *history tends to repeat itself*. Transformed into any possible forms, the doctrines of scientists who have lived in different conditions will always be only copies that are difficult to adjust to present reality.<sup>17</sup>

Judging and passing sentences on the dead, historians become morally responsible for the ways they are perceived by next generations. This is the power that the present has over the past – assessing behaviour of those who cannot defend themselves. At present, it is also possible to observe that journalists shape institutional memory with their publications in various media. *Some people see social and historical information as designed, intended and constructed in the form in which they are retrospectively presented to observers by some individuals or groups* (Elias, 2008).

## 5 The essence of market memory

Marketing appeared at the moment when the first transactions were made in the past times when products were manufactured at craftsmen's workshops; later on, products had to be priced, delivered to distant locations and advertised at market places. At that time, buyers of products had to remember the quality of products, to compare their prices with the prices of other competitive goods and to learn how to bargain with the use of proper arguments. It can be assumed that market memory appeared at the same time as trade, and it has been developing since then, at first, on a small scale and, later on, on a large scale. Advertisements – publications, signboards, signs on building facades, cinemas and announcements – can be found everywhere, reminding us about various products.

Market memory is cultivated by institutions that are referred to as companies. It can be defined as knowledge about the fact that there are some goods of particular quality gathered at a specific place at the specific time; these goods can be bought for a proper price, and they can be consumed according to some accepted standards.<sup>18</sup> Potential customers are forced to remember information about the ways how to improve their appearance and health and about products enhancing their prestige in their environment. Marketing memory is shaped by promotion, that is, by a monologue of a company presented to an unknown customer. This involves advertisements broadcast by media, which force customers to purchase goods according to the current trends. Oncoming holidays and family celebrations foster the use of remembered schemes in activities that are initiated by some key words,

<sup>17</sup> The difference between an original and its copy can be compared to the difference between a museum and a souvenir shop. Long queues are formed in front of a museum where some priceless pictures can be admired, whereas at a souvenir shop, it is possible to buy their almost ideal reproductions at reasonable prices.

<sup>18</sup> The definition provided by the author of the article.

such as a present, a gift, a souvenir or a keepsake. Hence, the cultivation of traditions becomes an important determinant that allows the company to provide additional sale. If it were removed from buyers' awareness, manufactured goods would become useless and unsold goods would be an additional burden for warehouses.

Repeated every day, every week, every month and every year, rituals and various cyclical celebrations of a local, regional or national character come as a framework that must be filled not only with proper behaviour but also – and first of all – by offering proper goods.<sup>19</sup> Market memory seems to be an obvious phenomenon and customers are not even aware of its existence. It is a long-term memory that is manifested by a brand. Sometimes, however, it appears only for a while – because roadside advertisements are quickly forgotten. Market memory is passed on from generation to generation, forming groups of loyal customers. Some of them feel obliged to continue the consumption of the same goods as their parents used to consume, only to confirm their identity. Market memory contributes to establishing relations in the society – consumption of the same goods results in the fact that even people who establish relations with complete strangers like each other or establish consumer clubs.<sup>20</sup> Using a far-reaching metaphor, marketing memory can be compared to a path set by an advertisement that has left its imprint in consumers, forcing them to purchase some specific products that have appeared on the market.<sup>21</sup> Its structure is formed, on the one hand, by small, middle-sized and large companies and, on the other hand, by the mentality of local community members who generate the demand for products they know very well. There is also a phenomenon of market amnesia that can be understood as a scrapheap where all the information about products removed from the market in the course of technological advance is sent. They can raise some sentiments, nostalgia and memories in family or amongst friends, especially when such forgotten objects have been replaced by their substitutes, the quality of which cannot be compared with the perfect original. A phenomenon of market memory de-archiving can also be observed, in which knowledge about old products is quickly utilised as unnecessary burden. Market memory is related to a process of economisation, and it can be observed when goods selected purposefully by customers have lower prices, have smaller dimensions and are more energy saving. It is directly related to the financial situation and living conditions of customers, and this fact affects the volume of consumption. Undoubtedly, there are various factors that reinforce market memory. Some of them can be analysed with regard to actual relations observed between producers and consumers. Some other factors are beyond such control because they come as a result of emotions that appear under the influence exerted by the use of purchased goods. There is also market stigmatisation of those who wear different clothes or eat different food. They are perceived as freaks or eccentrics ignoring new fashion trends.

At present, the process of remembering is facilitated by modern media that makes sure that the space around customers is filled with information about new products. It is very difficult to imagine the existence of contemporary people without them, because at present, in order to survive, we need to remember what things to buy, how to consume them and how to get rid of depreciated equipment. Sometimes, market memory results from customers' envy towards owners of luxury goods. In a sense, it can be viewed as a positive phenomenon, because it mobilises less resourceful customers to obtain additional means in order to purchase the desired goods. It is worth noting that people are able to modify their memory only to a very little extent, and it results in its unification in a particular segment. A response to such an attitude comes with mass production. The question how much distant the past to which market memory refers to is can be easily answered: in the case of food products, it is several days; in the case of industrial goods, it is several weeks; and in the case of medicines, it can be even several years. Market memory is directly related to customers' financial situation and living conditions. Customers know how much money they can spend on particular purchases and what kind of credits they can use. Hence, customers should be convinced that they can afford further expenditure. They should also remember that the lack of proper equipment, cars or clothes can often make them worse than other members of their local communities. Market memory of people who hold prestigious positions at their work is different from that of other employees of the company. The first group consists of luxury goods consumers, whereas the latter group is formed by those who buy promotion goods. A similar division can be observed in the categorisation of consumers by their age, gender or place of their residence. In numerous cases, market memory can be reconstructed by dieticians, by physicians,

<sup>19</sup> For example, the celebration of the 1st November generates the demand for flowers and candles.

<sup>20</sup> For example, Harley-Davidson Street motorcycles, which are light, agile and perfect for urban riding.

<sup>21</sup> In elderly people's apartments, almost identical furniture can be observed because it used to be the only furniture available at shops during the era of planned economy.

by pharmacologists or even by historians and archaeologists who can now provide information about healthy consumption, referring to the past rituals and ceremonies.

Market memory performs several functions: (1) transfers knowledge about the market, (2) develops methods of consumption, (3) allows us to understand symbols, (4) reinforces behaviour stereotypes, (5) forms groups of loyal consumers and (6) informs about purchasers' mentality. Such functions are usually inconspicuous; however, discerned by sociologists and psychologists, they can be used in the development of advertising spots. Despite the fact that market memory is very important, its role should not be overestimated. Market memory does not teach us how to do shopping; it cannot protect customers from wastefulness and mismanagement of their financial means. Furthermore, it cannot cover all the information about production methods, prices and expiry dates. Still, assigned to some particular persons, it affects their perception of the market situation. One of the ways in which customers are engaged into the process of remembering involves repeated advertisements aimed at the promotion of brand products. In some cases, importunate messages bring about results that are quite opposite to the intended ones. Nevertheless, because of skilful and long-term presentation of some positive features of a company, its image can be remembered for many years. Brand promotion also contributes to the formation of thinking stereotypes, methods of purchase, methods of use and exploitation of purchased goods. Exposing them as fiction is dangerous or, at least, it can be perceived as a dangerous and hostile action. Their social efficiency depends on numerous and often personal fantasies – a part of our social reality (Elias, 2008). Acquiring knowledge from studies on institutional memory, it is possible to transfer and use methods of control over consumers' behaviour.<sup>22</sup> Applying tools that have been already tested in some other conditions, it is possible to quickly achieve the intended aims.<sup>23</sup> It is also possible to state with very high probability that market memory transforms all members of the society into customers because their existence is closely related to the consumption of newer and newer goods. The effectiveness of remembering is increased when information is transferred in the historical, patriotic, administrative, social or even religious contexts.<sup>24</sup>

The tasks of market memory involve diminishing any cognitive dissonance through suggesting customers that they are rational and sensible people even if they have made some improper purchases. Their actions are justified by external factors and any negative terms will be ascribed to somebody else's extravagance. The interest in market memory can become a starting point for a new trend in market research, because specialist literature has not provided such a term yet. It is worth focusing attention on clear distinction of separate features characterising it. The first one mentioned can be the development of relations, based on everyday shopping; the second one can be the way of interpretation of advertisement information, and the third one can be triggering intended response in customers. Referring once again to the definition of market memory, it can be defined as knowledge about products, which is collected in customers' minds with the use of images, sounds, symbols and texts, which are transferred there often against customers' will.

## Conclusions

A new approach, market memory, has appeared because of the phenomenon of emergence. It has been generated based on considerations over the specific types of memory and theoretical annotations that come as practical reference to the discussed questions. Such an operation has allowed the author to articulate the features of historical, collective, institutional and market memory (Table 1).

**Table 1. Features of various types of memory**

Memory
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical – a set of facts and a source of knowledge about the past;</li> <li>• Collective – the awareness of the impact exerted by events from the past on the present and the future;</li> <li>• Institutional – an interpretation of historical events in a particular context;</li> </ul>

<sup>22</sup> In the article, the author presents such an analogy. In this way, he transfers theoretical reasoning from one field to another, from institutional memory to market memory.

<sup>23</sup> For example, knowing that most consumers are conformists who, as a group, often change their minds under persuasion, they are not faithful to any principles and, under some specific conditions, they can quickly accept someone else's ideas if they see some profits for themselves; it is possible to fill in their memory quickly by applying various marketing operations, such as advertisement, promotion prices, company images and brand products.

<sup>24</sup> Writing books that are related to a specific company, for example, *Mercedes-Benz* by Paweł Huelle.

- Market – knowledge about the advantages of products, their prices and the ways of purchase.

**Functions of**

- historical memory – providing knowledge about past eras;
- collective memory – transferring and cultivating our ancestors' traditions;
- institutional memory – stabilisation of organisational structures;
- market memory – development of images related to enterprises and product brands.

**Aims of**

- historical memory – gathering knowledge about the past;
- collective memory – shaping relations between generations;
- institutional memory – emphasising the significance of institutions;
- market memory – reminding customers about the need of buying.
- 

**Impact exerted on**

- historical memory – is practically impossible;
- collective memory – is difficult to exert;
- institutional memory – is purposeful;
- market memory – is necessary.

**Tasks of**

- historical memory – extending resources related to information about the ancestors;
- collective memory – developing identification with the society;
- institutional memory – developing attitudes consistent with the assumed objectives;
- market memory – affecting customers' decisions.

**The subject of**

- historical memory – artefacts;
- collective memory – cultivation of traditions and customs;
- institutional memory – interpretation of events;
- market memory – features of products.

**Places of developing:**

- historical memory – museums and archives;
- collective memory – families;
- institutional memory – schools, universities, ministries, self-governments;
- market memory – markets.

**Creators of**

- historical memory – scientists;
- collective memory – closest relatives, friends and journalists;
- institutional memory – decision-makers;
- market memory – psychologists, sociologists, celebrities and idols.

**Reinforcement of**

- historical memory involves providing funds for archaeological research;
- collective memory involves developing close relations between generations;
- institutional memory involves cultivating traditions;
- market memory involves repeating information.

Source: the author's own study

The considerations presented in the article allow the author to verify the assumed hypothesis in a positive way – knowledge about the methods applied in the development of historical memory fosters the development of additional notions, such as collective memory, institutional memory and market memory. The aim of the study, that is, the attempt at presenting the method of activating emergent phenomena, has, therefore, been achieved. In the considerations, it is possible to notice that subsequent implementations of the notions are created by far-

reaching analogies. Hence, the discussed method of developing and defining new notions can be applied in the development of concepts that allow us to analyse new phenomena appearing in our environment.

## Summary

The article illustrates the phenomenon of emergence, which involves the development of new concepts as more information comes in. Using analogy, it is inferred that historical memory may be treated as knowledge resources recorded in stories, diaries and specialist publications, also including artefacts gathered in museums and historical monuments, which represent the culture of a particular society. Collective memory, in turn, constitutes historical awareness that is manifested by cultivation of traditions and customs, reconstruction of structures in which previous generations used to live. The concept of institutional memory is connected with a specific vector that provides collective memory with magnitude and direction in the form of interpretation of events; it is the resultant of exogenous and endogenous processes taking place in a society. This classification gives rise to yet another category of knowledge: market memory. The idea of market memory involves reminding various communities of products, the consumption of which is supposed to satisfy their needs at a certain level; however, it also leads to replacement of currently operating devices with new and more advanced ones.

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