

MAIN TRENDS AND PROSPECTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS IN THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

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Abstract: Development of self-sufficient civil society in modern Kazakhstan, aimed at achieving high-level parameters of mature democratic social relations, personal freedom, social solidarity, self-sufficiency and, finally, state or legal security is too complex, multifaceted, and long-term process, which must be based on conscious generation of fundamentally new political thinking, new behavioral norms as well as interaction between citizens and communities based upon self-esteem, respect for people, mutual support, aspiration for enhancing people's participation in solving both daily as well as the most important strategic common problems faced by territorial communities and the state. One of key issues in following this way is to promote the development of civil society as the aggregate of non-political relations (economic, ethnic, spiritual and moral, religious, etc.).

The article analyses theoretical foundations of civil society development, presents the analysis methodology of the current civil society institutions, provides the reader with the analysis of the realms and directions of Kazakhstani non-governmental organizations (NGO) activities nowadays, discusses possible trends and prospects of the development of Kazakhstani NGOs in the realm of human rights as well in social and cultural domain.

Keywords: civil society, civil society institutions, non-governmental organizations, protection of human rights, social and cultural activities.

INTRODUCTION

The systems thinking approach to comprehending the society first emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century (Marx et. al.,) and became the advanced paradigm in the twentieth century (N. Luhmann, T. Parsons et. al.,). Within this approach, the society is regarded and defined as a social system i.e. as some social and material formation, in which the relationship between its constituent elements is stronger than the relationship of the latter with elements that do not belong to this formation (Antipov 1988).

Besides, there is a constant dispute between two mutually exclusive approaches to explaining the origin and essence of the society in its definitions. According to one of them, the society is a natural formation, according to the second approach, the society is an artificial construct, artificial mechanism, designed by people for the benefit of individuals. It is well known, that among those who support the first perspective there are A. Comte, H. Spencer, T. Parsons, R. Merton, A. Etzioni. Such thinkers as J. Locke, T. Hobbes, J.J. Rousseau, and others represent the second approach.

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The society as social reality was the focus of interest for many prominent scholars, each of whom tried to interpret it in her/his own way. For instance, Marx defined it as “the product of people’s interaction”, A. Bogdanov considered the society to be “an economic organization which spontaneously emerged”, i.e. both believed that the society is the outcome of production relations between people. (Pugachev 1998)

T. Parsons (Parsons 1998) defined the society as social system, which is characterized by high self-sufficiency and can exercise functions of pattern-maintenance, integration, goal-attainment, and adaptation.

The term “civil society” in broad sense suggests participation in the activities of political parties, non-governmental organizations, civic initiatives and social movements, as well as participation in other associations beneficial for the society.

The concept of civil society is usually used in close association with the notion of citizen activism. Thus, the civil society can be defined in short as organized activity of people groups which have an influence on the development of relations inside the state and at the same time which are representatives of neither state institutions (so-called first sector), nor non-profit organizations (second sector). Thus, sustainable development of the realm of non-state relations is one of the most important indicators of the mature civil society, non-governmental or third sector as it is also designated. (Battal 2013)

The institution of NGO is now the basis for developing civil society in Kazakhstan, which is represented by the extended network of organizations in the country. NGO is the community of like-minded people, privately created on voluntary basis aimed at implementing civil initiatives, solving pressing social problems based on principles of openness, self-government, fund-raising, whose activity does not pursue the purpose of deriving commercial profit. (Bondartsova and Gumenchuk 2015)

RESEARCH METHODS

One has to use such means as epistemological analysis for effective studying NGO as the basic component of civil society which would enable one to study this phenomenon as process and as product.

One should first find out the unit of theoretical analysis of this phenomenon; the corresponding choice will determine the boundaries as well as the content of analysis. Progress made by modern scholarly research on NGOs suggests that the primary level of knowledge on NGOs as subjects of social field has already been achieved by scientists.

Researchers offered different NGO typologies, sorting them out into the following groups:

1. Mutual aid organizations which unite people based on common problems or troubles (for example, Council of Veterans, Association of People with Disabilities, etc.);
2. Organizations with distinct social focus (charitable foundations and organizations, aimed at solving humanitarian and social problems);
3. Organizations of “club type”, encompassing various self-improvement groups and interest clubs;
4. Organizations of “social defense” nature focused on the protection of the environment in the broad sense, i.e. they may carry out activities involving not only nature conservation, but also the protection of culture, language and so on;
5. Human rights organizations, monitoring the lawfulness of executive authorities’ activities, in particular, the ones of state punitive organs, and the compliance with prescribed by law procedures during electoral campaigns, elections, and so on. (Sungurov 1999).

On the whole, the researchers conclude that in order to boost NGO participation in civil society development, two processes must occur simultaneously:

1. NGO must prove to authorities their indispensability, namely, to develop analytical materials of such quality and provide such services, which government agencies cannot offer.
2. The government has to recognize the indispensability of NGO activities, as an effective tool for enhancing the capacity of state policies. (Akhmetov 2014).

We consider the form of NGO engagement in the implementation of activities in the various realms of Kazakhstan’s social life to be the basic unit of research on the development of civil society.

It is this simple and available for analysis subject will enable one to use different approaches to research procedures and outcome evaluation. First of all, it enables one to comprehensively analyze the process of civil society development in all its complexity. Second, the agglomeration of forms of NGO participation in the implementation of activities in various realms of social life is organized in accordance with the direction of these subjects’ interaction in the country’s social space. Third, based on the NGO engagement one can get the idea of practical aspect of their activities, development trends, contradictions and risks of the process of civil society development. Fourth, the use of the form of NGO engagement as a unit of analysis secures us from reproducing the scholarly work already done by other researchers and possibly makes the future outcome of our work interesting for others; as a result, our findings do not duplicate, but rather complement the accumulated knowledge with new facts and conclusions.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Analysis of NGO activities in Kazakhstan enables one to assert their dominant role in three essential domains of society life: human rights, social and cultural, as well as environmental ones.

In these domains, the activities of Kazakhstan NGOs include such major dimensions as (Akhmetov 2014):

- Human rights protection in the country. The vast majority of NGOs is not engaged in general rights protection activities, but rather they make a focus on performing one of legal functions: most often they work on human rights dimension, as well as on informative (counselling) and communicative ones. Public initiative on improving the legislative instruments deserves special attention, which is the reflection of law regulatory function;
- Activities on poverty reduction in the country. Charitable NGO are most active actors in the fight against poverty among the institutions of civil society in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Their activities are focused on providing aid to representatives of socially vulnerable groups of population - orphans, low-income families, people with disability, pensioners, the homeless, as well as to medical, educational and childcare facilities;
- Efforts to provide population with social guarantees. In the Republic of Kazakhstan NGO activities on providing the population with social guarantees are mainly carried out in three realms: healthcare, education and culture.
- Efforts to promote stable interethnic relations in the country. Ethnically oriented social and political organizations as well as ethnic cultural associations can be identified among Kazakhstan's NGOs whose activity is directly focused on the ethnic dimension of social development;
- Environment protection activities in the country. In Kazakhstan, vigorous activities of environmental NGO are mainly the result of the unfavorable situation in the country's environment, on the whole, and in particular, in some of the regions. Currently, the role of environmental NGOs is on the rise in the Republic of Kazakhstan: there are more than 300 environmental NGOs working in the following realms: protection of environment, environmental education and awareness, radiation safety, animal species protection, applied research, wildlife conservation, support of civil environmental initiatives, environmental insurance, environment of Kazakhstani regions. The process of consolidation of environmental NGOs is taking place: they combine their efforts within "Environmental Forum of NGOs of the Republic of Kazakhstan".

DISCUSSION

Let us examine possible trends and prospects of NGO development in the Republic of Kazakhstan, analyzing in detail their activities in such realms as human rights and social as well as cultural projects.

NGO activity, first and foremost, concerns **human rights realm**, which we determine in this case from the array of social relations managed by means of legal arrangements. In this context, the work in the realm is shared by two main actors - NGOs and the state. Their relationship is complicated and inconsistent: NGOs are non-state institutions, therefore, the state cannot directly take part in their foundation and operation. At the same time, in accordance with the law they must necessarily be legalized (registered) at state registration bodies; they are subject to state bodies' inspections and so forth. In their turn, the NGOs have regulating impact on state activity in the legal realm, most legal institutions and instruments of which are controlled by the state itself.

According to the degree of focus on legal issues, NGOs can be divided into following groups:

Legal civil society organizations whose mission is the legal protection of individuals and various social groups;

Humanitarian civil society organizations which indicate that their mission is to provide free aid, handouts to certain categories and strata of the population (this includes both satisfaction of basic needs and creating conditions to meet the needs at higher levels); but indirectly they also affect the legal realm.

The third category of NGOs occupies, so to speak, intermediate position as it defines the legal activity as only one dimension of its complex doings.

It is quite easy to distinguish between such groups of NGOs, if one analyses their statutory objectives: in documents of the first group (legal civil society organizations) legal activities will be the main statutory objective; in mixed group's statute legal dimension will be just one of the statutory objectives; the third group (humanitarian aid civil society organizations) will include the organizations, whose legal activities are carried out indirectly through the implementation of other statutory objectives.

In general, NGOs' legal activities are either remedial (NGOs promote re-establishing rule of law) or preventive (they aim at improving regulatory and legal framework in order to avoid violations in the future).

Obviously, such activities can be directly carried out only by citizens who have professional qualification of appropriate level, including both professional legal education and experience of work in legal sector. That is why, civil professional associations of lawyers of different legal practice areas are essential.

One may also categorize NGOs in accordance with the group of people whose rights they protect: general (legal aid to everyone), special (assistance only to a certain group of people), individual (one particular person); one may also classify them taking into account type and volume of human rights they protect: universal rights (protection of all rights enshrined in the Constitution of Kazakhstan, national laws and international treaties ratified by the state), sectoral rights (protection of certain types of rights or some individual right).

Summing up the above-mentioned data on NGO's human rights protection activities, it is worth noting, that the legal realm of individual country, as well as international relations is the field for vigorous activities of NGO in which they realize their statutory objectives both directly or indirectly.

The social and cultural realm is an important aspect of multifaceted activities of any state. Social and cultural development in considerable degree is associated with citizens' spiritual needs, as well as with moral, aesthetic and intellectual education of people. Nation's physical and moral health, its spiritual and cultural self-reproduction depends on the degree of efficiency of social and cultural institutions' work.

Scholarly literature on NGO's social role can be divided into four perspectives: service, self-development groups, social action and building civil society (Turgaleeva 2014; Liborakina, n.d.).

According to service perspective, the main purpose of NGOs is to provide population with services. State social service institutions carry out their activities based on information indicators and can disregard special needs of some population groups. Thus, NGOs carry out the same activities as state agencies, though their work is more efficient, flexible and better satisfies people's needs.

The perspective of self-development groups suggests that the aim of NGO activities is to boost human development. Therefore, NGO works on promoting social activity and voluntary initiatives. This sector's work is not just help "from the top", but rather predominantly self-help.

The perspective of social action emphasizes the role of social movements - they are regarded as the core of the «third sector», and their mission involves social change through collective action.

The fourth perspective regards the "third sector" within the development of civil society, its main idea is to defend its own interests, privatization of politics by the society.

These perspectives are not conflicting, but rather complementary, revealing the fundamental aspects of emergence and work of different citizens' associations in the democratic society.

Modern Kazakhstani NGOs may cover a wide range of social issues and work on several kinds of activities: for instance, such women's organizations as Business

Women's Association of Kazakhstan, Crisis Center «Companions», which deal with women's employment issues, entrepreneurship support, assistance to multi-child families and backing the creative youth.

Such broad field of activities of the majority of NGOs complicates the procedure of their categorization and identification of priorities. Therefore, to form the systemic perspective on the diversity of social and cultural NGOs, we shall analyze the structure of state social and cultural policies, which include such sectors as education, science, culture, health care, physical training and sport, and social protection.

The state social and cultural policies involve development and implementation of general programs of support and promotion of social, academic, educational and cultural dimensions of the social life at the state level. However, in practical terms government bodies sometimes lack financial resources as well as necessary number of qualified staff to implement social and cultural development projects. (Suleymanov 2012).

Therefore, ultimately, NGO activities focus on interaction with government programs and additional efforts aimed at satisfying the needs of population in these sectors. Based on the above-mentioned sectoral division, we can distinguish between the following main prospective directions of social and cultural NGOs' activities: academic and educational as well as cultural and educational sectors, health care support, and social aid.

Thereupon, it is worth analyzing each of them taken separately.

Scientific and educational activities involve efforts on developing or searching for educational and scientific programs and projects, programs supporting gifted young people, promoting scientific research and innovations, etc.

It is rational to distinguish between NGOs' activities in the realm of education and research. The former should focus on supporting intellectual youth's progress; the latter should boost scientific capacities and motivate scientists to tackle urgent problems of today.

NGOs' tasks in this realm are as follows:

- Exchange of resources and information on developing educational projects and putting them into action;
- Forming expert teams on educational issues and NGO problems in the realm of education;
- Public monitoring of Kazakhstani educational sector;
- Development of mechanisms effecting decision-making in education, as well as the ways to interact with state agencies at the helm of educational sector;
- Implementation of joint Internet-based projects.

Public scientific organizations are associations of scientists created for target-driven development of relevant branches of research, protection of professional interests, coordination of scientific research, and exchange of experience. Public scientific organizations can operate permanently or temporarily, forming qualified research teams in order to solve scientific and design-and-engineering problems.

High-potential directions of public scientific organizations' activities are as follows:

- Expert assistance and technical support for state projects and programs;
- Consulting services on scientific and technical issues for organizations;
- Carrying out research and tests;
- Cooperation with foreign and international organizations, scientific and professional associations, unions and societies.

Thus, NGOs complement existing state social institutions, assist citizens in solving problems common for them, as well as defend their interests. In their turn, all these activities promote establishing social contacts and unlocking philanthropic capacity of the society.

It should be noted, that research and education sector should be absolute priority for the development of any country, and so state activities in this respect are extremely important; that is why, exactly the projects supporting the development of science and education must predominate.

NGOs, in their turn, can provide intellectual and financial resources, as well as consultation assistance in putting programs into action. For instance, environmental state projects are carried out under experts' supervision and with the support of research fellows, as well as members of national and international environmental organizations.

Cultural and educational activities involve moral and aesthetic education, the satisfaction of people's spiritual and cultural needs. This group of activities includes the foundation of clubs and associations of people with common interests and professional focus; establishing art centers, galleries, arranging exhibitions; starting programs which promote art, creating charitable foundations to support art and culture, carrying out programs on preservation of national historic sites, and so on.

In the future, a lot of associations, movements and organizations concerned with the development of Kazakhstani culture will be quite possibly created in this realm. Two types of NGOs associated with this can be distinguished: the first type NGOs are founded by like-minded fellows or representatives of certain professions based on common interests; the second type NGOs are established to carry out cultural and educational work for all members of the public.

The first NGO type, the so-called club-type NGOs, create and cultivate the best patterns of traditional art and culture through communication and their representatives' interaction (both professionals or amateurs). The internal links and motivation of such NGO members are strong enough to ensure their integration, as well as the efficiency of principle of support for "group members", and quite complicated procedures of obtaining the membership of organization. Though, as a rule, these NGOs are not numerous, they embody the centers of spirituality and high morality of the society. Their leading role at the social level is to nourish and develop national high culture, to increase the number of cultural elite representatives.

The concern of NGOs of the second (open) type should be focused on "bringing culture to the masses". Due to the existence and activities of such organizations, centers for the promotion of art, concerts, art exhibitions operate with the aim of educating everyone interested in national and world cultural heritage; they also satisfy population's needs in recreational activities.

The next aspect of social and cultural realm is health care. This aspect includes the humanist campaigns (helping the terminally ill, healthy lifestyle promotion, programs on protection of motherhood and childhood, support programs for people with additional needs, organization of donor and charitable centers, founding hospitals, and so on.

In this regard, one can identify so-called self-help organizations created by people with serious health problems to support each other in difficult situations; charitable organizations whose purpose is to raise funds and pay the obtained money for the treatment of the ill members of the society.

The activity of charitable organizations is still relatively new practice for Kazakhstan, therefore, they do not yet provide a wide range of medical services, but rather mainly raise funds for treatment either abroad or in Kazakhstan. Therefore, if experts regard the activities of Kazakhstani charities in terms of management cycle, they mainly analyze problems, provide expert evaluation on cases related to citizens applying for help, make decisions on giving charitable grants; support people in the course of treatment or in the process of receiving assistance.

In general, the rationale for establishing NGOs is in their capacity to solve many problems in the social and cultural development of the country. This is possible so long as the main functions of NGOs in this realm (Abdullaev 2014) are efficiently performed.

1. **Service function:** As noted above, NGOs are the product of social institutions and focused on satisfying specific needs of the society. At the same time, NGOs will better serve the society if they will reduce the time the citizens spend on applying for help. It means that the person who, for whatever the reason, comes to NGO receives from it high-quality and timely

service instead of wasting the time in the “corridors” of the organization, as it is often the case with government bodies;

2. **Informational function:** It is two-dimensional, because, on the one hand, NGOs provide information through consultations, workshops, information bulletins for certain groups of the population; on the other hand, they inform the public about the achievements and problems of social and cultural life, for instance, through public service announcements. Appropriate formation of information channels and messages ensures the efficiency of performing this function;
3. **Organizational function:** Which is to unify, to consolidate citizens in order to achieve certain goals. Associations of citizens also design and implement social and cultural development projects. The effectiveness of organizational capacities of the third sector depends on the degree of social partnership with government bodies and commercial enterprises, which will provide NGOs with legal and financial support of their activities;
4. **Representational function:** NGOs represent common interests of various strata of the society, assist state authorities in taking these interests into consideration while state bodies design state social and cultural policies. This lobbying of social interests in state bodies exactly is the measure of effectiveness of representation function. The mechanism of lobbying is the most effective here; it is carried out through the network of formal and informal contacts of NGO members with authorities;
5. **Ideological function:** Third sector organizations vigorously shape the public opinion of various society groups on political, economic, as well as social and cultural issues. They spread some common worldview and form people’s ideology. Impactful propaganda ensures the effectiveness of performing this function; it draws people’s attention and shapes public opinion;
6. **Educational function:** It involves familiarizing the public with the world and national achievements in science, culture and art. The effectiveness of NGO cultural and educational activities depends on engaging qualified staff, as well as receiving benefactors’ financial assistance, and state subsidies and grants.

In our opinion, ineffective performance of the above-mentioned functions determines the lack of the effectiveness of Kazakhstani NGOs in solving social and cultural problems.

In our opinion, the whole range of factors determines this situation. First, at present the main obstacle which significantly slows down the development of the national third sector is the lack of civic activity in the country. NGOs have not become state core partners in providing social services yet, therefore, most people

do not perceive them as beneficial and vital actors working in the social realm. NGO ability to affect the government defines their effectiveness and usefulness. Their influence is carried out through establishing advisory bodies, consulting, providing the authorities with analytical information while officials develop state social and cultural policies.

Another factor slowing down NGO development in social and cultural realms is rather weak managerial approach to solving corresponding problems. NGOs operating in the political and legal, as well as economic realms, as a rule, have the established mechanism to address problems, which is quite appropriately governed by laws and regulations, and business trends, respectively. Social and cultural processes are to smaller extent determined by the state and the market, therefore, NGO activities are quite sporadic in this realm due to the lack of established algorithm-based management of solving problems, and uncertain beliefs of organization founders concerning structural and functional features of specific organization.

The third factor which negatively affects developing non-profit sector in Kazakhstani social and cultural realms is low citizens' awareness of the activities of third sector organizations, which hampers their development and prevents building public confidence in them. Political and legal NGOs vigorously use information resources to draw public attention. As for social and cultural initiatives, only relatively small circle of "interested" people knows about these organizations' activities. Non-profit sector must publicize the positive results of social projects, cultural events and charity campaigns to make members of the public more socially active. To address this issue NGO management should realize the significance of these activities and establish positive contacts with "target groups", which in such case can be represented by the following arrays of people:

- Citizens- "clients" for whose benefit the organization was established and at whom organization's activities are directed;
- State bodies and institutions, whose work overlaps with non-profit sector operation;
- Other NGOs with which it is possible to build coalitions, unions and associations in order to carry out joint projects on social and cultural development;
- Organizations or individuals who can provide expert advice, consultation, food and clothing handouts as well as financial assistance;
- The media as a means of shaping public opinion about events related to NGOs' social and cultural activities.

Contacts with the "clients" of a certain NGO provide the opportunity to obtain "feedback" to correct the organization's activities as well as to «recruit» new members. It is necessary to define "target audience" within the public and focus

specifically on it in order to develop bilateral information process. One can use the following methods to inform a certain population group:

- Print and digital media; for instance, creating organization's website, where NGO can not only post the information on organization's activities, but also communicate via web forums;
- Newsletters, brochures, which NGO can leave in places, visited by target group representatives.
- Addresses via the local media, and the like.

NGOs must constantly take part in public proceedings, meetings and seminars held by state bodies to be engaged in dialogue with the authorities.

Partnerships with other organizations, movements and parties are established through developing and carrying out joint projects, as well as meetings and "round tables" on certain problems. For instance, developing the single database of organizations dealing with overlapping social problems, will enable NGOs to significantly expand the scope of their activities and to increase the number of fulfilled "social orders". It is possible to attract the attention of consultants, experts and financial "donors" through shaping the positive image and prestige of NGOs.

Nowadays in Kazakhstan the majority of organizations and individuals who can offer handouts and financial aid, prefer to provide targeted social assistance or to create their own charitable foundations. This occurs due to distrust towards both government agencies and corresponding NGOs. Therefore, third sector organizations today face a very difficult challenge of debunking the negative stereotype of NGOs as "devourers of resources" and to restore trust in themselves and their activities. It is possible to remedy this situation only through developing strict and transparent mechanism of financial reporting. (Ismailov 2015)

The media provides a lot of opportunities for NGOs to draw all these groups' attention to non-profit sector. To deepen relationships with the media NGO use the practice of publishing press releases (periodic concise text messages about certain cultural events), making special thematic programs or series of reports devoted to social and cultural issues, as well as widely use public service advertising.

The fourth factor hampering the development of social initiatives is the weak influence of social and cultural NGOs which does not allow them to cover the masses by NGO activities, especially those people who live in remote areas and villages. Third sector organizations are mainly located in regional centers and do not have branches in district centers and villages.

"Cultural infrastructure" is insufficiently developed now. In Soviet times, there were clubs or cultural centers in every village: they performed functions of cultural, recreational and educational centers; now this practice does not exist anymore: there is no one to perform the mentioned functions.

It is well known, that nowadays the global information network, namely, the Internet has the most extensive infrastructure. It should be noted, that local online communities are the alternative to real organizations at present and perform the majority of their functions instead of them. Social media and, in particular, social communities replace the real communities, because they include very large groups of people who can communicate online, create interest groups or groups on certain issues, exchange opinions, give advice, and share useful information.

NGOs should also take into account the current trends, for in this case they will be able to reach more people and increase the level of providing people with their special services via the Internet. A big step forward in this respect is creating the Internet website, which would contain the complete database of different NGOs, directory of all domestic, foreign and international third sector organizations; the website could also offer online consultations by experienced lawyers, auditors, representatives of state bodies, consultants of donor organizations and other experts.

CONCLUSION

The daily operation of civil society and its organizations is the necessary prerequisite for achieving the rule of law and democratic governance. And vice versa, ignoring and suppressing public initiatives, the absence of mechanisms of participation by members of public and civil society organizations in the decision-making process leads to the decay of society, the growth of corruption, and to keeping increasingly large groups of citizens out of participation in solving social problems at the level of both the community and the state on the whole.

At the present stage of social development, we may speak of state and commercial sectors' work on satisfying the social needs and demands. However, the mentioned sectors cannot always satisfy the entire aggregate demand. Therefore, the so-called third sector emerges in the society through the mechanisms of self-organization; this sector is represented by diverse NGOs.

The role of NGOs in the society life is dual. First, the activities and development of various kinds of NGOs strengthen solidarity and social cohesion, which is manifested as national unity at the state level. Secondly, the presence of NGOs is the necessary condition for the operation of social institutions. It is well known, that social institution is the basic component of the social structure, it regulates people's behavior in the most important realms of public life.

Thus, NGOs complement existing state social institutions, assist citizens in solving common problems, as well as defend their interests. In their turn, all these activities promote establishing social contacts and unlocking philanthropic capacity of the society.

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