

**Elitist Democracy or Liberal Democracy?  
Schumpeter Revisited**

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The 1980's brought about a revival of Political Theory, and within that, of the Theory of Democracy. From various different interests and perspectives, descriptive and prescriptive questions related to basic values, empirical phenomena or the most influential factors in the transition towards liberal democratic political systems have been studied with a renewed emphasis. Obviously, the collapse of the socialist states of Eastern Europe has reinforced even more the re-emergence of the Theory of Democracy, up to the point we can say that today it has become one of the most important issues within the field of Political Science.

Without going into metatheoretical questions about the reasons that have caused this phenomenon -such as the relocation of the welfare state since the 1970's, the developments of particular neo-marxist theories, the literature concerning neocorporatism or political parties and social movements, the influence of several authors with a strong ethical perspective (Rawls, Habermas, Foucault, etc.)-, in this paper I would like to highlight the convenience of renewing the classic contrast between the liberal ideas and practices with respect to democratic ideas and practices within the liberal democratic paradigm. Convenience that has as much theoretical meaning as practical, that is to say, referring as much to the analytical clarification and accuracy of the main concepts and values used by the different theories of democracy, as referring to the result of empirical political processes.

With this objective in mind I will take the work of Schumpeter as "leitmotiv" of the discussion of the Theory of Democracy. Almost fifty years after the publication of Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy (1942) this work continues to be a required reference for the aforementioned theory. Although it is only considered as a highly intelligent "after-dinner chat", as Jon Elster comments following Robbins (Elster 1983), it would continue being a "classic" after-dinner chat, at least when presenting some cultural aspects of the crisis of capitalism or in analysing the limits and possibilities of the different theories of Democracy.

In Schumpeter's work we are interested above all in two central ideas: the theory that capitalism has structural components that make it the victim of its own success, and his notion of "another theory" of Democracy, more recently titled in different ways -competitive theory, economic or elitist theory, etc.- and its contraposition to a supposed "classical doctrine" of Democracy.

In the first section of this paper I will refer to the question of whether the schumpeterian analysis commits or not some fallacies in its arguments, such as the fallacy pars pro toto in relation to notions of capitalism and

modernization, the fallacy of the hasty generalization, or what we can describe as the fallacy of abstraction: a theoretical attitude implicit in some of the political philosophical studies. At the same time, I will question very briefly the Schumpeterian notion of socialism.

In the second section we will discuss, on the one hand, whether the contrast alluded to between the "classical" and the "other" theory of Democracy is currently adequate. I will highlight this contrast from the weberian perspective of political theory connected with the conceptions of Schumpeter. On the other hand, I would like to refer to the convenience of presenting present day liberal democracies as historical products in which there are three distinct dimensions, each one endowed with an autonomous logic in contrast to the others.

## **I. CAPITALISM, MODERNIZATION AND DISCOURSE FALLACIES**

Within the area of social sciences, as well as political philosophy, three distinct fallacies often appear in the arguments: the classic fallacies pars pro toto and the hasty generalization, and what we characterise as the fallacy of abstraction.

By fallacy pars pro toto we understand an argument that attributes exclusive responsibility of some consequences to the somewhat complex economic or social phenomena, for example capitalism, which in reality, however, are shared with other phenomena of the same kind, socialism for example. That is to say, to understand one part of a general phenomena as if it is the whole.

The second fallacy, for its part, consists of the inference of a generalization that is too excessive, or founded on a very small sample. Both fallacies are studied in the area of classical logic (1).

Finally, the fallacy of abstraction refers to the supposition, explicit or implicit, that a theory possesses a greater explanatory power according to the degree of abstraction of the categories used in its analysis, without referring to the real empirical world in more than an intuitive or impoverished mode. It is a more general fallacy than the previous ones because it refers to the explanation claims of the discussion and not to a particular argument within it. In the political field it is a characteristic that affects above all the analyses produced by the philosophical tradition (Foucault's work about "power" is possibly a recent example of this. McCarthy 1990).

Benjamin Barber writes:

"Where political science avoided politics without achieving science, political philosophy avoids politics by achieving philosophy" (Barber 1988:5)

We can briefly see now if we can attribute or not these fallacies to Schumpeter when he analyzes some of the "cultural contradictions of capitalism", contradictions which imply its future substitution by a Socialist economic organization (1.1). Subsequently, we note one brief consideration about the concept of Socialism used by Schumpeter (1.2).

### **(1.1)**

Schumpeter's reflections about "the cultural contradictions of capitalism" have a certain connection with the latter work of D. Bell. The evolution of this economic system would have brought with it the rupture of certain elements that were the origin of its efficiency and stability. In this way, a kind of ancient greek hybris would have been produced, an excess that would undermine the agents of control, those that act as the sophrosyne of the system (2).

But Schumpeter is basically an economist. He does not produce any synthesis of a sociocultural nature, concerning the process of modernization of Western societies, but he limits himself to remarking some of the consequences of the "observable tendencies" in the economic system of the process. Our intention in this section is to comment the equivocal use that is made of the term "capitalism", sometimes understood in its strict economic sense and sometimes in a much wider cultural sense nearer to what Weber understands by modernization. This use should not be criticized in itself but it can easily lead to erroneous conclusions. In order to discuss this question it would be useful to determine two brief characterizations, more than definitions, of what we understand by capitalism and modernization.

By capitalism we understand an economic system based on the production of individuals, groups or organizations for a market in order to obtain benefits (Berger 1986). More than "property", whose legal and political regulation has substantially changed from the beginning of the liberal era, the main trait of this system is, then, the existence of an effective market.

Modernization is a more comprehensive concept and thus more difficult to characterize without creating ambiguities. In a general sense, it consists in a process followed by Western societies in the last two centuries, in which there have been produced multidimensional articulations and causal

interrelations between, at least, four different areas: economic growth unknown up to then, the institutionalization of political and legal processes that have as a basic core the organizational principles of political liberalism, the cultural changes associated with the development of the illustrated concept of reason, and, above all, the technological revolution at the heart of the processes of industrialization. Thus one is dealing with a complex phenomenon of great extent, and that in strict sense affects only some of the countries of the world linked to the European cultural tradition.

Characterising both terms in this sense, capitalism, as an economic system, is one part of modernization. But there could also be modernization with other economic organizations in society (e.g. socialism). And from a linguistic point of view, we can conclude that not all what is related to the global phenomena can be related to each of its components. Nor viceversa. The analysis of social sciences can delimit those phenomena that must be associated to the global process as an articulated historical product (modernization), and those which must be associated to one of its components (capitalism). To attribute to the latter the responsibility of a phenomena that actually corresponds to the former would be to fall into the pars pro toto fallacy. (This is what various Marxists schools, for example, have often done when they have associated individualism, social anomie, or territorial imbalance to the capitalist mode of production, without considering, however, the possible relation of these phenomena to socialism).

In Schumpeter's arguments about capitalism and its evolution we find this fallacy, and on occasions, running the risk of inferring excessive extrapolations about the future of capitalism -or about the absence of its future- from what he considers its "observable tendencies". Without attempting to be exhaustive, and avoiding strict economic science arguments, some of the aspects that, according to Schumpeter, affect the "cultural contradictions of capitalism" are:

1) The Process of Creative Destruction. Capitalism cannot be stationary. It revolutionizes the economic structure "from within", destroying what went before through a process of competition that affects costs as much as quality. Creativity in consumer goods, methods of transport, of production, systems of organization, search for markets and technology. It is a process that undermines traditional supports existing at a given moment, weakening its own system. Moreover, capitalism devitalizes the idea of "property" (the existence of great and small shareholders).

II) Rationality. Capitalism encourages rationality in behaviour. Rationality involves, on the one hand, the "maximization" of particular interests

of individuals and groups, the use of the instrumental means in a coherent form, and in the same way a series of readaptations empirically controlled by a procedure of flawed-testing. On the other hand, rationalization rushes into both private life and cultural forms. Children are not now economic assets, hedonism and consumption have substituted saving and the previous "worldly ascetism" (Weber). Consumption wins against accumulation, diminishing the desirability of incomes above a certain level.

At the same time, however, when the breaks of certain values associated with ethical or religious tradition fail (the sophrosyne), irrational components of behaviour that are critical for capitalism emerge and can not be refuted with rational arguments, especially when based on long term considerations.

III) The Obsolescence of the Entrepreneurial Function. Increasing difficulties for the classical function of management. Increasing importance of specialized groups. The context, moreover, has been accustomed to change and each time a greater number of factors are calculable. The success of business ends up in removing the owners.

IV) Protecting Strata. In the modern era there was a symbiosis between the nobility and the productive sectors. The former occupied the State organization, guided political decisions and supplied officials for the army (the bourgeoisie was only sometimes in charge of local administration). It was a sector that survived the social and technical conditions that produced it. In conclusion: the bourgeoisie is politically defenceless without the protection of non-bourgeoisie sectors, but capitalism, however, encourages the breaking up of the precapitalist framework of society.

V) Intellectuals. Characterized as those who exercise the power of the spoken and written word, they are used to not having any direct responsibility in practical matters and thus, they lack a direct knowledge of experience. They encourage self-conceived attitudes as "critical", more from a logic of opposition, we could say, than from a logic of government (Similar to the role of the demagogues in the Athenian Assembly at the end of V C.b.C.). There exists a parallel between education and the scale of moral values in the intellectual sectors and the administrative or bureaucratic sectors against the values and technical criteria of the economic system as it operates.

In Schumpeter's work these five arguments supporting the concept of the process of self-destruction of capitalism are put in the shadow of the feasible substitution by socialism. Presumably, the same phenomena would have been treated in a different way if one contemplated the reality of

"emptiness", that Schumpeter rejects, or if one maintained that there was no other alternative to capitalism than capitalism itself. In this last case, for example, the process of Creative Destruction could transform a handicap into a virtue. If what is changed is the type of capitalism more than the type of economic system the question would not consist so much in seeing whether this process occurs, but in seeing to what point it is capable of finding instruments to adapt to social reality. And it seems beyond all reasonable doubt that capitalist systems find these instruments more easily than socialist systems do. To sum up, the negation of a particular type of capitalism does not imply the negation of capitalism as a system. Here Schumpeter's arguments fall into the fallacy of hasty generalization.

On the one hand, it also seems a little partial to maintain that it is capitalism which promotes "rationality" in behaviour. Rather it is an attitude linked to modernization and its technical components, whose consequences must be seen within the inherent ambiguities that modernization presents from an emancipatory point of view. It is understood that the moral values that influence a process of emancipation undermine at the same time the ideas and values that ensured sociopolitical stability. (Something similar happened in the process of Athenian "Enlightenment" in the V C.b.C.). But currently this is a phenomenon related more to postmodernity than to postcapitalism.

On the other hand, from the crisis of the great ideologies that claimed to have global explanations of social reality, and of the appropriate therapies for its main problems, we can agree that today we find ourselves immersed in a new process of individualization. We know that the first modern Enlightenment substituted religious faith with another faith, the faith of reason (scientific, historical, political, etc.), but in the second half of the present century we are witnessing another turn of the screw in this process. There currently exists greater ethical autonomy -and, thus, a greater disorientation- with respect to the secular guidelines of that first modern emancipating movement. Today the individual no longer has to consider attaining a life after death but neither does he see a normative ethic ahead that tries to assist in the advent of some "new man" (of whatever type).

In this way, the fallacy pars pro toto glides constantly in the Schumpeterian arguments about rationalization, considering it in its technical meaning as well as ethical. However, the attention he pays to the extra-rational components of behaviour results in a good antidote to the risks of the use of the fallacy of abstraction to remind us that these components can be balanced with difficulty through rational arguments. It should be added that those periods in which the effectivity of these ideas and values that "cement" sociopolitical organization continue to be questioned. That is to say, in those

periods in which cultural contradictions of the present system appear.

Something similar could be said of the analysis of the entrepreneurial function presented by Schumpeter. The capitalist evolution has effectively dislodged a kind of "old" manager in some productive sectors. However, Schumpeter's conclusion results in an excessively wide application. More than facing the fallacy of pars pro toto we are facing a hasty generalization of an "intuitive" character, based on little evidence. It is a functional re-adaptation rather than a decline.

Another valid intuition of Schumpeter (but again he goes beyond what seems conceptually and empirically reasonable) is that of seeing which differences between liberal logic, on the one hand, and democratic and social logic on the other, in capitalism's relations with the traditional protecting strata, intellectuals and Administration. Indeed, neither bureaucracies nor intellectuals (in a greater sense) are presided over by the logic of the first economic liberalism, which understood the social coexistence from the individualist perspective of private property and freedom of the market and which advocated, moreover, a harmony between private interests and general welfare. It is understood that social perspective unites the followers of ideologically very different positions, such as Conservatives and Socialists, in the criticism of the practical consequences of the capitalist process as put forward by liberal premises. However, also in reference to this point, the Schumpeterian conclusions appear at the very least exaggerated, if not unfocused. One thing to be said is that intellectual logic is similar to the classic demagogue (for example, that of the Athenian Clio in the War of the Peloponnesus narrated by Thucydides), this logic being based on the maximization of specific values and interests without considering any criteria of technical application and practical incompatibility of other values and criteria that are also desirable. And another thing one can conclude is that intellectuals must necessarily undermine the basis of the economic system (Although many of the intellectuals find themselves working outside the ambit of the market, for example in public Administration, a position that facilitates their ability to present themselves as defenders of the "public interest"). In whatever case, this is a question that must be remitted to detailed studies of an empirical nature like those that have been carried out in relation to decision-making processes and implementation of public policies during the 1980s (3).

To sum up, in Schumpeter's arguments we observe the existence of the pars pro toto fallacy in relation to the processes of rationalization and destruction of protecting strata, while in the analysis of the process of "creative destruction", of the obsolescence of the entrepreneurial function and the role



of the "intellectuals" and the bureaucracy, the fallacy of the hasty generalization is present.

Anyway, it is important to remember that Schumpeter's arguments about capitalism do not facilitate the reasoning that we have characterized as fallacy of abstraction, with the possible exception of some aspects of the process of creative destruction. When he deals with economic or cultural questions his conception possesses a clear methodological vocation that connects it with the empirical world. His categories are not inclined to over-theorising on ethical or philosophical terms that try to be more explanatory as well as more abstract, and which, lacking empirical and practical sense in many cases cause it to have practically no informative value. Schumpeter's work implicitly claims the criteria of Popperian falsability in order that some of its central theses can be refuted (as has happened on various occasions).

The following table is a summary review of Schumpeter's arguments:

**Table1**

**(1.2)**

From Schumpeter's reflections about socialism we only want to note here two aspects and a final consideration. Firstly, the inevitable over-theorising that his "intuitions" carry about the supposed systemic integration and social integration of the socialist economic organization. It would seem that once a certain level of industrial development is achieved and once the inherent problems of the period of transition are overcome the alleged economic efficiency of socialism and its greater level of functional rationality would be imposed by a type of immanent logic of the historical evolution. The sudden ups and downs of capitalism could be avoided, the central planning would complete the process of the managerial concentration of the great productive units, it would no longer be facing the contradictions between the public and private fields, etc.

Moreover it would hopefully, according to Schumpeter, result in a greater ethical loyalty on behalf of the citizens and the intellectuals than in the previous productive system (4). The hegemonic elites would have a greater number of instruments with which to carry out policies of an authoritarian style and to "rationalize" the investments of private savings, and even Schumpeter does not conceive great difficulties at the time of inserting elements of a bourgeois origin -as individual initiative- in socialist bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is conceived, however, as an enormous and inevitable

administrative apparatus, significantly more extensive than current ones.

Secondly, the distinction between the processes of "maturity" and "immaturity" in transition to socialism do not seem to have the empirical sense that it would require. In fact, all the real transitions have been "immature". Schumpeter, following a very classic perspective that has as points of reference E. Bernstein and M. Weber, is correct in saying that in the "immature" conditions the socialist system can only be imposed by an authoritarian system that coercively socializes property and that can impose without opposition economic centralization. But it is not the most desirable situation. Although Schumpeter, with Weberian pessimism, coincides with the socialist reformists in conceiving the process of gradual transition to socialism as a peaceful phenomenon, almost consensual, when the capitalist condition is sufficiently "mature". According to this view it would be possible to consider Schumpeter as the last utopian socialist (or the penultimate, considering the mythical indestructible capacity of socialism, as P. Berger reminds us. Berger 1986) (5).

Finally, with the collapse of the socialist systems of Eastern Europe the idea of socialism suffers an inevitable transformation acquiring different semantic meanings from the traditional ones. Paradoxically, believe that its strength as a "regulative idea" (in Kantian terms) of social life develops alongside its lack of precision. This is nothing new. Sometimes it has happened that however "clear and distinct" an idea has been which has tried to normatively regulate human relations, the worse it has resisted the passage of time. In ancient Greece, for example, the concept of diké (justice) evolved from the aristocratic and religious meaning of the Homeric period to the interpretation plurality it had in the crisis of the Athenian democracy during the wars of the Peloponnesus (ending in V century b.C.). The growing strength of the diké as a critical idea of denouncing the traditional social and political order was correlative to the loss of the prior single-minded semantic sense. From Hesiod to Thucydides its lack of accuracy accompanied its critical function.

Something similar is presently happening with the idea of socialism. As we can see in the following section, socialism can no longer present itself as the monopolizer of contemporary diké, but at most as one of its components. And as one component among others, it would be necessary for its particular logic to clarify its relations with other sometimes contradictory logics of the liberal, democratic in a strict sense, ecological, and functional components of the present day diké at the end of this century. One can no longer affirm a utopian diké of a socialist nature against the habitual pragmatism of political decisions but to found a diké that would be as utopian

as it is pragmatic. And in my opinion, the emancipative and effective possibilities of the concept of socialism would come out on top. In short, the question is to understand socialism as an emancipative contradictory and complementary component of the others, more than as a real alternative. (This is one of the ways of understanding socialism more as a "cultural end" than as an economic system, as T. Bottomore argues in the introduction (1976) to one of the various Spanish editions of Schumpeter's work (Schumpeter 1984). An introduction that currently possesses an autonomous historical and theoretical value).

## **II. ELITISM AND LIBERAL DEMOCRACY**

In this second section I will defend the thesis that the contraposition of Schumpeter between a "classical doctrine" of democracy and "another theory" -that we can, describe as elitist or competitive theory- does not conveniently, result in analytical considerations of conceptual clarification. And, at least, for two different reasons: on the one hand, because it is a contraposition that mixes preliberal and liberal conceptions in the notion of "classical doctrine", a question that becomes an obstacle at the point of analysing things such as leadership, or the connection between "participationist" conceptions of democracy and preliberal -and even premodern- political considerations. On the other hand, and as it is usual with authors bound to the elitist tradition, because it separates excessively a "realist" attitude from the normative components of liberal democracies.

In the first place, we note an aspect of the Schumpeterian conception of democracy which follows the political thinking of Max Weber (II.1) and secondly, we consider Schumpeter's analysis of democratic elitism as a good basis to understand the limitations of decision-making on having to combine at least three different dimensions in liberal welfare state democracies (II.2).

### **(II.1)**

#### **Schumpeter-Weber**

Although he uses more dissemination style, Schumpeter pursues the Weberian analysis about the ambivalence of the Western processes of bureaucratization and democratization. As it is understood, the link between both processes with rationalization followed by modern societies is considered by Weber from an attitude removed from the illustrated naïve conceptions that

were associated with the triumph of "reason" in social relationships and in the processes of institutionalization and of political decision-making as an unmistakable and individual emancipative meaning. At the core of this rationalization there exist however, according to Weber, irrational tendencies that propitiate hierarchical relationships of an authoritarian type in several areas (economic, administrative, cultural, etc.) far away from the process of individual autonomy advocated by the illustrated traditional ideologies, -as much of a liberal type as a socialist one (6).

In a strictly political frame, the emancipative ambiguities of the process of Western rationalization established by Weber outline his known theses about bureaucracy and liberal democracy. In the analytical area this means that the classic elitist theory and the theoretical basis of liberal democracies can be articulated. Any study with a realist trend must understand the practical consequences that the growing complexity and the process of elitism in institutions and in processes of political decision-making imply. The triumph of rationalization in this area, that would demand the subordination of the bureaucracies to the representative political elites, does not only involve, according to Weber, positive consequences for the democracies with a liberal core but also carries associated phenomena such as oligarchic processes in organizations, passivity of the electorate, charismatic personalization of the leadership, a clear predominance of the executive, etc. These phenomena were considered by Weber as something inevitable and irreducible in the preliberal categories of democracy. These categories still possess an almost exclusive "ethical" character based on confused notions such as the general will, or on normative desires such as the participation of the citizens, which are not later developed in terms of implementation.

In this way, the Weberian conception of democracy immerses part of its contents in the elitist perspective of the liberal tradition. Constant, Tocqueville and the American federalists warned about the authoritarian risks that democratization of the liberal rule of law could represent through the incorporation of participative rights, especially universal suffrage and the right of association. However, the Weberian concept of plebiscitary democracy that correctly signals the evolution of liberal democracies in the first two decades of the century is not in its turn exempt from ambiguities that can propitiate interpretations far from the normative basis of these democracies. Bismark is always present in the background of Weber and, in fact, the object of his attention was more the phenomenon of leadership than of democracy.

The work of Schumpeter breaks these ambiguities without renouncing the characterization of democracy as an

"Institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people's vote" (CSD 1950:269)

This competitive and elitist characterization eludes the Weberian ambiguities linking more clearly that "method of decision" to the rules, regulations, organization principles, and to the language of the rule of law. We are facing elitism from some unrenounceable pluralist bases. However, Schumpeter establishes his conception in contrast with a pretended "classical doctrine" that makes new ambiguities appear.

On the one hand, within this classic theory it results in not distinguishing between the aliberal participative conceptions of a Rousseauian nature (at times even antiliberal "organic" ones) and the conceptions that make the defense of the liberal core in the organization and the political rules of the State. This is the condition of possibility of a representative government based on the individualist perspective of a hostile acceptance of liberal political power.

On the other hand, the reasoned criticism that Schumpeter puts forward of "classic" notions such as the "Common Good" and the "Will of the People" -whether or not they are considered in relation to traditional Utilitarianism, as Schumpeter did- facilitate thinking about competence for political leadership of the "another theory" of democracy as a process almost totally lacking in ethical normative contents, beyond the functional criteria of efficiency, efficacy and stability of the political system.

Although this last aspect has been important, deserving a great number of criticisms by the participation theories in the last two decades -theories that cannot assume that collective government has to remain, in fact, in the hands of a small minority-, I think that it is the first aspect that represents the main analytical handicap of the Schumpeterian conception of democracy (This will be considered in the next section). Anyway, I believe this conception represents a good basis for counteracting the risks that often accompany certain conceptions of the modern philosophical tradition.

### **.Schumpeter and the philosophical approaches**

This tradition was used to put political relations on a horizontal plane. That is to say it has given priority to the issue of relations between the individuals of a group -whether they are conceptualized in terms of cooperation or of egoistical self-affirmation- focusing however much less

attention on the vertical dimension of the relationship between these individuals and spheres of power, always controlled by minorities that demand obedience. And this is the strictest political dimension (Pareck 1986). On the other hand, philosophical discourse was used to put forward arguments removed from practical and empirical considerations. This has brought with it a certain tendency towards what we can call "ethicity", understanding it as the study of political relationships as if they simply were a collective dimension of the individual ethic, able to be analyzed in the same categories but on a smaller scale.

This position often loses the focus on the object of political relationships in democracy because it concentrates much more on the rise of the demos to the cratos than on the opposite direction of the process of domination of cratos over the demos (despite the fact that people are theoretically involved as the source of power). Then it is not surprising that in the, sphere of philosophy some frustrating attitudes, at the root of Enlightenment, predominate what are thought to be the "ideal politics" which are both desirable and unattainable. These attitudes habitually use the kind of language (Wittgenstein) that propiciates the fallacy of abstraction in theoretical conceptions, as well as the consolidation of what we can call a logic of opposition by way of focusing on political questions. That is to say, a theoretical position developed from outside the responsibilities of government, which is self-conceived as more "radical" and "authentically emancipating" in the name of the maximization of particular democratic values, principally equality and participation (Burnheim 1985), but without considering very much its empirical applicability or the possible practical contradictions that the implementation of policies based on those values could assume for other desirable values, whether of a more preferable ethical nature (liberty, security, pluralism, etc.) or of a more functional nature (efficiency, efficacy) (7).

Schumpeter's theory allows, therefore, despite its analytical and normative deficiencies the study of liberal democracies from a political perspective that avoids the excesses of a horizontal nature and "ethicity" as well as the risks linked to the fallacy of abstraction and to the logic of opposition of certain philosophical theories about democracy. Following Weber Schumpeter rejects the possibility of reaching generalizations about practical life without producing sufficient empirical evidence especially when these generalizations are formulated in the abstract language of the philosophical tradition. And as Rustow pointed out subsequently in analysing the processes of transition to liberal democracies, methodologically this meant having to proceed carefully so as to not confuse correlations with causal explanations in the area of social sciences (Rustow 1970).

In fact, Schumpeter's conception of liberal democracies represents a synthesis between some elements of the pluralist paradigm and those of the classical elitist theory (Held 1987). This is a synthesis that has been subsequently developed in what is sometimes referred to as the neopluralist paradigm (Dunleavy-O'Leary 1987) in which certain phenomena noted by Schumpeter have become the focus of attention: the institutional leadership and party political leadership, "the systemic" importance of the elitist democratic quality decision making in cabinets and in parliamentary coalitions, processes of configuration and aggregation of interests, etc.

Nevertheless, I think that the main risk of the Schumpeterian "another democracy" is that of "throwing the baby out with the bath water". Schumpeter is correct in criticizing the naive conceptions of Rousseau and Bentham -naïvities maintained subsequently by some pluralist or participation theories- but this is ' a criticism in which it seems that the moral values fade away from the political analysis. This gives a real presence to other paradigms, such as the different types of Marxism, the' movements of the American "new right" or the democratic participation radicalism. One thing is to show the obsolescence of the legitimating ideas of ethical nature present in the "classical doctrine" of democracy (supposing that such a theory exists) and another is to facilitate a normative emptiness in the theoretical foundations of the "another democracy" (despite Schumpeter's constant implicit references to normative values). The cultural aspects of empirical democracies seem to disappear in the name of an "ideal type", the economic theory of democracy, which in fact only describes partial aspects of liberal democratic states, (Dahrendorf 1988).

It is in this sense that the contrast between a "democracy as a method" and a "substantive democracy" -which Schumpeter's theory makes possible- seems to be another source of confusion. No democracy can dispense with normative values even if it is presented as a "formal" or method question. Nor can it dispense with formal or decision-making questions. The point is rather to decide the coherence between method and normative bases of the different democracies from ethical and technical criteria and principles.

This last aspect is related, moreover, to the handicap noted previously: the descriptive and prescriptive risks associated to the lack of distinction between preliberal and liberal requirements in the "classical doctrine" (I think that Carole Pateman was correct when she stated some years ago that to continue talking about a "classical doctrine" that encompasses such different authors as Locke, Bentham and Rousseau constitutes an absurd exercise perpetuated, among other things, by the repetition of those that oppose the elitist theory of democracy from a more

normative than analytical position. C. Pateman 1970) (8).

Schumpeter rejects the "ethicist" pretensions of the classic theory of democracy, but he continues to talk about a contrast between the classic democracy and a competitive and representative democracy. This makes possible the interpretation of the latter as an "imperfect" democracy, because it does not allow an effective participation of the citizens in the decisions in which they are involved. According to the preliberal rousseauian version of the classic conception, the fact that citizens are outside of the decisional processes has to be based only on technical considerations, but not on the liberal approach of the convenient independence of the political elites respect to the citizens (or the constituents).

On the grounds of this flaw in Schumpeter's theory can find the opposite position -very widespread but, according to my view, erroneous historically and conceptually-between a "direct democracy" and a "representative (or indirect) democracy", both presented as two different versions of the same class of political organization.

In fact, the heart of the western political organizations has not been democratic but liberal during the last two centuries. The representative government, which has grown from political liberalism, does not constitute and "indirect" or "imperfect" form of the "self-government of the people". Even recently when some democratic elements (universal suffrage rights of association parties of masses etc.) have been grafted on its organizational principles the institutional and decisional logic of the representative government continues to be extremely different from a political system based on a so-called "popular-will". In this point the Madison's lucidity -in thinking of the representative government as something extremely different and more desirable than democracy (Federalist 10)- seems clearer and conceptually better than Schumpeter's approach.

## **(11.2)**

From the foregoing, I believe it is convenient to return to the more "classic" comparison between a preliberal and a liberal theory of democracy as two distinct paradigms (in a Kuhnian sense) in which different programmes of research (in a Lakatos sense) are developed (9).

Naturally, the political, economic, and cultural context of present day democracies is very different from that of the period of Constant and Tocqueville. However, the powerful idea of the distinction between ancient and



modern liberty continues to be one of the basic criteria of demarcation of the paradigms of democracy (10). Briefly, and as has been noted many times, from the distinct notion of liberty that we adopt we obtain different democracies (Berlin 1988, Sartori 1987, Bobbio 1984).

### **Different ethical dimensions within liberal democracies**

It is in this way that current liberal democracies can be understood as historical products of an equilibrium between various autonomous dimensions or components: liberal, strictly democratic, and social dimensions that are found controlled by different kinds of logic but whose articulation has demonstrated a particular stability in the empirical sphere. (This argument finds itself far removed from the preliberal theory of democracy which does not distinguish between these components and its different internal logic). This articulation has been produced however from the liberal core of the organization of political power (negative liberties, separation of powers, principle of legality, etc.). And it is from this liberal core that we can understand the possibilities and boundaries of democracies that assume this as their main organizational basis.

In the same way that the first political liberalism was non-democratic, even anti-democratic, the logic of the positive liberties of the democratic dimension based strictly on the values of equality and citizen participation is foreign to liberal principles. Neither negative liberty nor separation of powers nor the principle of legality are in a strict sense aspects of the democratic attitude. (For example, the fact that citizens have to rely on protective measures with respect to what social majorities can decide in a particular moment is a requirement that pertains to the liberal dimension and that is, however, foreign to the strict democratic dimension).

So, we can state that liberal democracies have no vocation to become political democracies, that is to say, systems that try to maximize their strictly democratic dimension. Liberal democracy is rather established as an alternative system to all the other attempts to construct a "true political democracy". And it is based on the articulation -historically and empirically full of tensions- between different kinds of logic (initially between two unique types of logic, the liberal and the democratic). And we must bring ourselves back to the practical ground to see how the values and rules of both dimensions are going to articulate themselves in such a way that neither cancels out the other (11).

And here Schumpeter reappears. As well as the liberal democracies

of the industrialized countries cannot prevent themselves from being elitist and competitive. Because of this Schumpeter is correct in criticizing the "classical doctrine" understood as a democratic theory of a non-liberal nature. That is to say, as a theory based on the values and organizational principles of the strictly democratic dimension and which leaves aside the liberal perspective.

Something similar happens when the liberal and democratic dimensions aggregate themselves into a new dimension, the social (above all in the postwar period). Although more related to the democratic dimension than to the liberal, the social component is endowed with an autonomous logic irreducible from the latter two (Requejo 1990). It represents the third element of the present concept of citizenship in European liberal democracies (Barbalet 1988) and a new step in the process of modernization of Western societies. Based on the values of socioeconomic equality security associated with the diffuse concept of welfare it is, as is understood, one component whose institutional origins can be found in the actions of certain European states during the last years of the XIX century, states that did not rely on a real liberal organization (Germany). But it is, at the same time, the key dimension of the contemporary socialist tradition. And from both perspectives, this dimension invades the organization principles of liberal democracies.

To mark the autonomy of the social dimension with respect to the liberal and strictly democratic dimensions means that such non social aspects of the first liberal democracies and the non liberal democratic aspects of the social component should be considered (Offe-Preuss 1989). And it also means considering the difficulty of finding an optimum of the three basic ethical dimensions in the specific policies as a structural handicap. None of these dimensions can be found maximized.

Facing this multidimensionality we can see, on the one hand, how in the area of political science in the post-war period the traditional pluralist models did not pick up this dimension profoundly. On the other hand, in the empirical field one cannot deny the political incidence of the confusing language of the non-liberal conceptions of democracy, especially in an authoritarian context that tries to impose a liberal democratic system. As is established in the classical study coordinated by O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead, the claim of maximizing the different components works towards the breakdown of an authoritarian system even if subsequently it works in favour of an inevitable "desencanto" (Schmitter-O'Donnell 1986) (12).

The normative ethical basis of the components of Western liberal democracies can be expressed in the following way (13):

## **Table2**

Consideration of liberal democracies as a historical product based on three distinct components, which presently need each other but respond to different premises and normative interests, seems convenient when we analyse both the descriptive and prescriptive aspects of the re-location of Western welfare states since the 1970s (14). The growing internationalization of decision-making processes, the incidence of new technologies, the necessary adaptation of public intervention in market mechanisms, the emergence of more "micro" interventions in comparison with the period of post-war expansion (1950-1975), the new distributive criteria, the policies of monetarism and restructuring inefficient productive sectors, the changes in the processes of rationalization of public administrations, etc, in Schumpeter's perspective, run the risk of being analysed only as "normative" questions of a technical nature within the main programmes of research of present day political science (pluralist, elitist, "new right", cooperatist, etc) leaving aside the normative aspects of a more ethical nature.

### **Understanding ambiguities**

Specially from the 1980s, the state can no longer be seen as the only rational decision-maker. The Weberian rationality seems to have diluted a complexity in which the administrative elites cannot be considered as playing a subordinate and passive role. Today there are more problems to solve, more variables to consider, a greater number of private and administrative levels involved, a greater acceleration in decision-making and it is more difficult to establish at a particular time what the "public interest" means. After the emergence of these phenomena it is difficult not to accept that the practical processes of political decision-making are more hidden and autonomous than what the traditional rhetoric of liberal democratic states used to accept (or the pluralist "program of research" of the 1950s and 1960s). And this changes the meaning of the concept of rationality even when one questions, from different perspectives, that its concept has remained trapped in its technocratic aspect. It seems convenient not to separate it from this sense when we talk of emancipative or "communicative" rationalities (Habermas 1981), if we do not wish to remain trapped in the contrary perspective, that is, the one that tries to claim an ethical rationality considered in direct contrast to the technocratic or instrumental rationality.

In my view, political science and in particular the policy analysis will have to show in the 1990s the useful sense of a concept of ethical rationality built from (in stead of being in contrast to) the instrumental rationality. As well

as what happened with the democratic ambiguity of the growing process of bureaucratization -an ambiguity that made this process at times an obstacle to the democratization process and an essential condition for the extension of the "democratization" welfare policies'-, the process of growing technocratic consideration also possesses similar ambiguities in relation to some political systems that attempt to articulate the liberal, democratic and social components in the most coherent structure possible.

Schumpeter's theory encourages to jump to conclusions about the rational character of the ethical values (in spite of the ethical background of his own conception). The recent emergence of political theories with a strong normative component -especially since Rawls's work- seems to refute that conclusion. However, I think it continues to be an important point of reference at the moment to understand the ambiguities or the "ethical" and "functional" shadows that whatever political practice are carried away (universal suffrage appeals to selfish motives, participation appeals to manipulation, etc).

These ambiguities and shadows to be marginalised, for instance, by the contemporary ethics of communication, in spite of its sensitivity towards pragmatic considerations and the acceptance of dissension. This approach used to pick up more the linguistic aspect of pragmatism than the political aspect (Apel 1988). This approach leads to the attempt to reach an impossible synthesis between the classic democracy and the "other democracy" which Schumpeter was thinking about. Following the communicative line we can only arrive at the claim of a "participatory" democracy, in contrast with the desirable boundaries of liberal democracies.

From my point of view, the question is to find legitimate criteria in liberal democracies from both, deontological and consequentialist, but with an explicit consideration of the boundaries imposed on the instrumental rationality. In this point I think that Rawls goes further than Apel and Habermas (15).

It is the same concept of the rule of law that must be reconsidered in the 1990s (Gauthier 1990). Even if we assume the concept to be an "ideal type", the changes in the social conditions relocate the effective limits and possibilities of this "ideal type", especially from the invasion of the social dimension in the structures and decision-making processes of liberal democracies. But while the liberal core is maintained in the rule of law I do not think that we are justified in supposing that the paradigm has changed, despite the efforts of the corporatists and participationists.

Technocratic and bureaucratic processes have consolidated the

autonomy of state in relation to society and of the decision-makers with regard to representative politics. And these processes have represented some clear limits for the expansion of the strict democratic dimension within liberal democracies and for the possibilities of its effective reform (Dahl 1982), as Schumpeter already suspected. To talk, for example, of "economic democracy" as a key aspect of the thorough development of democracy is something residual in the current practice of liberal democracies. In whatever case it is something that remains distant from any alternative to these democracies (Adamson 1990) (16). But at the same time, the incorporation of the social dimension has reinforced the practical uses of the contemporary rule of law.

The knowledge that we have about the new decision-making processes is not very precise. Neither is our knowledge of the political impact of new technology nor of government agencies and the organizations of interests. But our knowledge of possible articulations between ethical normative values and principles and technical criteria is smaller still. Sometimes both have been treated, intuitively, as two separated realities, even contradictory, with no connection (Lozano 1990). As if after criticizing the Weberian approaches we must inevitably go back to them (17).

Political theory is readapting itself to the period of cultural "postmodernity" at the end of this century. We are witnessing the fragmentation of rationalities which does not seem contradictory, however, to a more comprehensive interdisciplinary discussion. Liberal democracies are necessary and paradoxically instrumental ends. And it is the permanent pressure in the process of compatibility of measures and objectives which confer the most open character to the reform of these democracies. It seems that we must look for the outcome of liberal democracies within themselves. And in this sense, it seems convenient to avoid the realization of utopian models of an ethical nature which do not reflect its operative applicability as well as a resigned attitude which explains everything in terms of the "rationality of the system". (And it would be a temerity to consider liberal democracies as something irreversible -at least in the Southern European countries in a historical time when their technological development could mean the inexistence of second opportunities).

Schumpeter's work constitutes an invitation to work with greater empirical accuracy but without renouncing to a political theory that is as comprehensive as possible. And I think that in order to update the normative -ethical and technical- foundation of liberal democracies it would be convenient to keep the Schumpeterian "tone" of his "after-dinner chat".

**Table1**

<b>Schumpeter's arguments</b>			
	<b>Logic Fallacies</b>		<b>Linguistic Fallacy</b>
	<b>Pars pro toto</b>	<b>Hasty generalization</b>	<b>Fal. of Abstraction</b>
<b>Pr. of Creat. Destruction</b>	-	X	X
<b>Instrumental rationality</b>	X	-	-
<b>Extra-rational components of behaviour</b>	X	-	-
<b>Obsolescence Entrepreneur. Function</b>	-	X	-
<b>Protecting Strata</b>	X	X	-
<b>Intellectuals</b>	-	X	-

**Table2**

<b>Normative ethical basis of the components of Western liberal democracies</b>			
	<b>Liberal dimension</b>	<b>Democratic dimension</b>	<b>Social dimension</b>
<b>Political Liberty</b>	<b>Negative liberties</b>	<b>Positive liberties, indiv. a. collectible</b>	
	<b>Personal rights Limitation of political power</b>	<b>Civil and associative rights</b>	<b>Socioeconomic rights</b>
<b>Economic Liberty</b>	<b>The market</b>	<b>The market + some public regulations</b>	<b>The market + Public interv. Public sector</b>
<b>Political Equality</b>	<b>Juridical Equality Equality before the laws. Same laws, same courts.</b>	<b>Equality of participation. Universal suffrage. Association rights. "Equal Liberty"</b>	<b>Equality of opportunities as equality in socioeconomic conditions Policies of positive social discrimination</b>
<b>Economic Equality</b>	<b>Equality of opportunities in the market</b>	<b>Equality of opportunities in participative conditions</b>	<b>Guarant. minimum material conditions. Welfare. Quality of life Participat. in social services</b>
<b>Security</b>	<b>Polit.: public order Jurid.: Predictable behaviour</b>		<b>Econom: Minimum income Social: Sickness benefit, pension unemployment benefit, etc.</b>

## NOTES

- (1) A rigorous and readable introduction to the analysis of logic, whose first part is written in the style of a thriller with Sherlock Holmes as the main character, Neblett 1985.
- (2) It is understood that in ancient Greece the concept of hybris (excess) evolved from being associated with the demos during the Homeric period until it was associated with the concept of "tyranny" in the following centuries. For its part, the sophrosyne was an ideal of rational measurement of self-control, as opposed to the hybris, which in the political sphere was expressed in the constitution of Solon (594 B.C.). A Constitution that was the first of several reforms which ended in the political system of Cleisthenes, Ephialtes and Pericles, called demokratia by Herodotus.
- (3) In these studies it has been noted, for example, the convenience of introducing changes in public bureaucracies in order to transform the traditional administrative model into one which encourages the following criteria: 1) rigor in formulating and implementing policies and control of the results obtained; 2) flexibility in the internal organization which allows the maximization of initiative and the it "entrepreneurial spirit" in levels of administration; 3) ability to learn from situations which change more and more rapidly. All this ends in the introduction of managerial criteria into the conduct of public bureaucracies, a question that leaves us far from Schumpeter's position of two almost irreconcilable worlds. A first evaluation of the criteria introduced in administration in Western countries during the 1980s, in the Revue Française d'Administration Publique, n. 51, Paris 1989.
- (4) Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis insist on the possibilities of loyalty and accountability on the part of workers in an "...economic democracy": "economic democracy, by providing an alternative to unaccountable hierarchical authority in investment and production, can promote loyalty, commitment and accountability on the part of workers and those who control investible resources" (Bowles-Gintis 1986:211).
- (5) In this area the fallacies of abstraction and hasty generalization are developed without hindrance, and the preliminary observation of Schumpeter about the risks of comparing a real system (capitalism) with a mental image cannot be considered as mitigation. (The conception of socialism is perhaps the part of his work which best illustrates the characterization of Schumpeter's work by Elster as an "intelligent after-dinner chat").
- (6) A recent attempt to overcome as much the Weberian pessimism as his critics -for example, Lukacs and the first Frankfurt School which in fact did not overcome that pessimism's the work of the "second Habermas". As is understood, his Theorie des Kommunikativen Handelns tries to defend a theory of rationality based on the post-Wittgenstenian conceptions of language that makes possible a new normative foundation of the practical world (ethical and political) that avoids the selective partialities of the process of rationalization of Western societies denounced by Weber, as much as the ineffectiveness or the abyss between theory and practice that show Adorno's and Horkheimer's conceptions and the traditional Marxism, respectively. In my view, the ambitious approach of Habermas and the exhaustive and refined analitical material employed is in contrast to the results finally obtained (Requejo 1991).
- (7) In this sense we can see, for instance, J. Burheims's concept of "demarchy" as an alternative model to "democracy" ("that does not exist in practice"). This "demarchy" is characterised by: 1) A "statistical representation" whose representatives are not elected by people. More or less as in the ancient Greek practice of leadership selection (It is not clear how represented can control their representatives); 2) Decision-making is composed of several autonomous bodies, and not of a centralized government (It is not clear, then, how the problems of a necessary coordination can be solved); 3) The ambits of decision-making are created by functional rather than territorial criteria.
- (8) A more recent example: the existence of a pretended "postliberal democracy" (Bowles-Gintis 1986).



- (9) We do not use here the more restrictive meaning of the concept of political paradigm employed by Raschke, Brand and Offe, which allows a distinction between an "old" and a "new" paradigm in liberal democracies from the invasion of the "new social movements". In the words of Offe: "A political paradigm permits answers to interrelated questions such as: a) What are the main contents and themes of collective action?; b) Who are the actors and in what way do they become collective actors?; c) What are the appropriate processes, tactics and institutional methods for dealing with conflict?" (Offe 1988:243 n. 1. Translated by the author).
- I think the distinction between paradigm and program of research permits a better classification of different "models" of democracy from a political science point of view. It allows, for example, the separation of the nine different models argued by D. Held as subtypes of two basic paradigms: a participation preliberal paradigm (models I, IIIa, IV, VIII), and a representative liberal paradigm (models II, IIIb, V, VI, and VII) (Held 1987).
- (10) In his famous conference of 1819, Constant argued: "But as the liberty that we need is different from that of the ancient Greeks, this liberty requires a different, organization from that which was suitable for the ancient liberty. In this the more time and the more energy that man dedicated to the exercise of his political rights, the more free he believed he was. In the type of liberty that corresponds to us, this will be more precious when the exercise of political rights leaves more time to pursue private affairs" (Translated by the author).
- (11) In this way, the vacillations of Tocqueville are understandable at the point of comprehending "democracy" as compatible or not with "liberty" (with the liberal idea of liberty). Only when socialism appears as a rival in the political organization of the European countries does it maintain a possible compatibility of "democracy" and "liberty", revising his previous opinion defended in De la Democratie en Amerique (1835). But in fact the articulation between liberal and democratic dimensions historically reinforced the rule of law in the liberal democratic systems (Sartori 1987).
- (12) This term comes from the analysis of the Spanish transition in the 1970s, contained in the study coordinated by O'Donnell, Schmitter and Whitehead (1986).
- (13) I have developed this point in a recent book (Requejo 1990).
- (14) From the 1980s it could be argued that there exists a fourth dimension, the Postmaterialist, articulated around the values of autonomy and critical solidarity. It is also a dimension distinct from the previous ones that comes associated with the "new social movements" (ecological, pacifist, feminist, etc) defending a clear anti-authoritarian component in the concept of "citizenship" and of individual emancipation. Following the American and European movements of the late 1960s, a critical attitude in the face of uncontrolled production, the technocratic reason and the bureaucratization process, an attitude that breaks some of the basic precepts of the "society of labour" (Habermas) implicitly admitted by the conservative, liberal, social-democratic and Marxist organizations. The political economy is no longer the emancipative science. In this dimension, the cultural elements displace the centrality occupied by the strictly economic or political elements. It is not so much it claims what we want to live but how we want to live. In this sense, it is a change with regard to how the quality of life should be understood. Anyway, the weaknesses of these movements can be described as follows: their link to a strict logic of opposition around a single claim considered "non negotiable" (Offe), the analytical deficiencies in which the fallacy of abstraction is very often present, an attitude of "ethicality" that marginalizes the technocratic aspect of rationality. All this makes the postmaterialist dimension appear to be surrounded by difficulties at the point of influencing the policies of the three "classical" components of liberal democracies since the Second World War.
- (15) In this sense I think that Apel's pretensions of making a "rational reconstruction of the universal foundations of ethics" (in a kantian perspective) has sense -in spite of some "postmodern" positions-, however in the strict political sphere his theory has inherent limitations. He needs to put together two different rational logics, the instrumental and

ethics, and within the latter he would need to consider different aspects endowed with its own autonomy (liberal, democratic, social, an postmaterialist) that in practice surfaced sometimes as contradictory. In Kohlberg's theory -which I do not think considers with accuracy the social and emotive components presents in moral reasoning- I think that the political area can be placed at most in the 5 1/2 stage within the postconventional level, even in the liberal democracies. This stage is simply superior to stage 6 (or to the Habermas's 7th stage) in the antinomic sphere of politics. The democratization of a society is something extremely different from the fact that the political system of this society has to be only "democratic". (This question is sometimes confused in Apel and Habermas's work, in contrast with Schumpeter's approach).

(16) I agree with G. Sartori that participation theories have to explain how and to what point their claims can invade liberal democracies when they have already accepted the liberal organizational bases of liberal democratic political systems. That is to say, when these bases have been accepted as the necessary condition for the existence of "other" kinds of democracies in specific and minor areas. But, unfortunately, this is not an attitude normally expressed in these theories which still want to reconcile the categories of "man" and "citizenship" in a political democracy, not as structurally limited as liberal democracies.

(17) Weber's distinction between an ethic of conviction and an ethic of responsibility is today a classic reference in the arguments about relationships between ethics and politics. As is understood, the ethic of conviction establishes not only the private behaviour of an individual but also the public behaviour: it must adapt itself to the moral convictions that it maintains independently from what are the consequences derived from the action. The ethic of responsibility, however, defends the position that behaviour must consider these consequences before being undertaken. And it would seem, at least in liberal democracies, the ethic of responsibility is more plausible than the ethic of conviction (as Weber argued). Fundamentally for two reasons. In the first place, the ethic of conviction is much less sensitive to the empirical focuses and practical considerations, always more complex and plural than the "principles" that try to regulate them. (It is a much more a "Socratic" approach than Aristotelian, which tends to advocate a series of "pure" policy-makers who are not very pragmatic and somewhat doctrinal). In the second place, and this is the essential thing, the "moral convictions" of a person are used to present themselves as contradictory when they try to implement them in reality. Moral values located on a similar level of an axiological foundation are antagonistic in their application, and probably the fallacy of abstraction appears once again. Nevertheless, the risk of the ethic of responsibility is complementary. It is the classic risk of instrumentalism. To sum up, one should try to adapt the convictions making them more sensitive to the systemic world, that is to say, to the prevailing logic in the practical sphere in order that the responsibilities can be effectively ethical responsibilities. In other words, one should pragmatically readjust the convictions to ethically relocate the responsibilities.

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