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*Maria-Daniela BONDOC, Ramona-Florina POPESCU,
Emilia UNGUREANU*

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Analysis of the temporary evolution of the Romanian migration flows abroad, on migration routes*

Maria-Daniela BONDOC¹, Ramona-Florina POPESCU², Emilia UNGUREANU³

Abstract

This article analyses the international migration of the Romanians based on their direction, within the extent of 1990-2008. The tendencies are being examined depending on the region of origin and of destination of the migrants and also depending on the residential environment of migrants. The study details the labour circular migration, divided on the fourth main courses. The authors try to conduct a literature review on the subject, emphasising the conclusions of different studies conducted for the considered period.

Keywords: international migration, migration routes, migration flows, circular migration, permanent migration, Romanians migration

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¹ Maria-Daniela BONDOC - University Lecturer Ph.D., University of Pitesti, Romania, Str. Targu din Vale Nr.1, Tel. + 40 745 770 758, email: daniela.bondoc@upit.ro.

² Ramona-Florina POPESCU - University Lecturer Ph.D., University of Pitesti, Romania, Str. Targu din Vale Nr.1, Tel. + 40 721 460 607, email: rf.popescu@yahoo.com.

³ Emilia UNGUREANU - University Professor Ph.D., University of Pitesti, Romania, Str. Targu din Vale Nr.1, Tel. + 40 722 760 883, email: emiliaungureanu@yahoo.com.

Introduction

As specialists affirm, the term of international migration might seem relatively straightforward: movement by people across state borders that lead to permanent settlement (Geddles, 2003, p.7). But recent realities show that it is not as straightforward as this. What we then choose to define as migration is an arbitrary decision and may be time-specific. Migration can be short-term or long term. Migrants could live in one country and work in another there can also be movement back and forth between sending and receiving countries (...). While at a basic level international migration can be defined as permanent or semi-permanent movement by people across state borders, the growth of short-term, rotation or contract migration shows how distinction between permanent and temporary becomes blurred (Geddles, 2003, p. 8).

As a consequence, the migratory phenomenon may be analysed from many points of view – the demographic structure of migration (on migrants' age, gender and education), the routes of the migratory flows (internal or external destination, nature of the course, occupation of the migrant at the destination), the consequences of the phenomenon (positive or negative, economic, social or psychological etc. From these aspects, this article analyses only international migration from the point of view of the migration routes in the case of Romania. This study completes the article concerning the internal migration routes (Popescu and Bondoc, 2009) because we believe that the entire complexity of this phenomenon should be analysed, and therefore, both the internal, as well as the international migration should be taken into account (Sandu, Cojocaru and Ponea, 2010).

In the next lines it will be considered that *international migration* presents two forms: circular migration and definitive migration. According to Simina (2008, p. 94), “people from villages from northern and eastern Romania were the first Romanian emigrants after the fall of Communist regime, having the greatest migration experience: before the 90's, they were travelling to work temporary in wealthier cities from central and western Romania (circular internal migration). Nowadays they are leaving for wealthier countries/cities from the European Union (circular international migration)”. It is important to underline, from the beginning, that in certain studies (Șerban, 2007, p. 17; Sandu et al., 2004, p. 6), the authors mention that Romanians' migration creates big problems concerning the valid assessment of the extent of the phenomenon, due to the temporary character of their travels and to the associated clandestine nature. In such cases, the hypotheses were formulated based on empirical data.

External circular migration

General tendencies concerning circular migration

The external circular migration, also referred to as temporary migration, may be structured into three categories: for work, for tourism and for studies. Statistics from 2001 (Sandu, 2000, p. 19) reveal that this form of international migration predominates, and the migrants often return to the country during their stay abroad (59% of these migrants have returned to the country at least once and 37% two times). Over time, some of the circular migrants tend to become definitive migrants. However, it was noticed that (Sandu, 2001, p. 3), along with the gradual extension of the Schengen area, the tendency of the circular migration to become permanent migration decreased. In other words, the easier the circular movement, the lower the intensity of the definitive migration (Sandu et al., 2004, p. 6). Sandu mentions, in the study from 2005 (p. 111) that, at the moment of the census of population and dwellings (CPD) performed in 2002, approximately 149000 persons had temporarily left the rural areas to go abroad, and the Community census of migration (CCM) performed in November - December 2001 indicates a number of migrants from villages that was higher by approximately 40000. The difference between the two assessments is explained (Sandu, 2005, pp. 111-112) by the fact that (1) part of the persons who had permanently left the town to go abroad may have been reported by the local experts as temporary migration, especially the Transylvanian Saxons who had left permanently may have been assimilated with temporary migrants and (2) due to the different data collection moments – the CPD was carried out on the eve of the winter holidays. By comparing the estimations to the number of inhabitants of the rural areas we obtained a temporary emigration rate of 14.6‰. The main manners in which the *legal circular migration* abroad takes place are: (1) as employee of Romanian companies relocated abroad (Simina, 2002, p. 11); (2) as a result of obtaining a contract through the inter-governmental agreements for the exchange of labourers, in cooperation with the competent institutions of the state⁴ (Simina, 2002, p. 11); (3) as a result of the migrant's own efforts to find an employer on the Internet (Simina, 2002, p. 11); (4) as a result of being part of a network structured on an ethnical, religious, regional, or familial basis (Baldwin-Edwards, 2005, p. 35; Sandu, 2001, p. 6); (5) as a result of obtaining a scholarship (Simina, 2005, p. 12).

If immediately after 1989 people used to leave abroad mainly within the networks structured on an ethnical, religious, regional, or familial basis, in the last few years, the flows were preponderantly structured function of the previously

⁴ The Ministry of Labour, Family and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the International Organisation for Migration, etc. (Sandu, D. et al., 2004: 10)

built networks (Sandu, 2001, p. 16). The creation of these migration networks is explained by the fact that migrants work abroad for a period of time, they return to the country, where they stay for a while, after which they emigrate again in order to work. In this manner, those who wish to migrate abroad on a temporary basis are helped by previous migrants (Constantin et al., 2004, p. 18).

Huge economic disparities in income and employment opportunities encourage migrants to utilize their migrant networks to plan and undertake their move to a destination country, often against and despite restrictive migration policies (Elrick and Ciobanu, 2009, p. 102). This type of migration was represented, in 2002, by at least 35,000 persons who migrated towards the EU, with labour visa, through the Romanian Office for Labour Force Migration (Constantin et al., 2004, pp. 16-17). The countries of destination and the main fields of activity (where they can be marked) were: Germany (IT, agriculture, gastronomy, health), Spain (agriculture, building industry, iron and steel industry), Italy (health, entertainment), France, the Netherlands (food industry), Finland, Cyprus (agriculture). According to Elrick and Ciobanu, the history of migration and development of the migration network correlated positively with the knowledge about migration and legalization strategies (Elrick and Ciobanu, 2009, p. 108).

Circular migration for work

Certain studies (Şerban and Stoica, 2007; Sandu et al., 2006; Constantin et al., 2004) analyse in more detail *the emigration for work*. For example, four main types of courses are identified (Şerban and Stoica, 2007, pp. 10-12), for the period 1990-2006: *private migration courses, privately-mediated legal migration courses, state-mediated legal migration courses, unmediated legal migration courses*.

It is believed (Şerban and Stoica, 2007, p. 10) that the *private migration courses* include all the types of courses that take advantage of the gaps in the law with the purpose of performing the migration, by combining or overlapping elements of lawfulness with elements clandestine in nature⁵. These courses were based on migrant networks and were developed with the help of the support granted among individuals, by virtue of the kindred, friendship, neighbourhood, common origin relationships, etc. In the case of 23% of the labour migrants who left in the period 2002-2006, the relatives helped them the most with their migration, followed by their friends who lived in the same settlement (16%) and by the acquaintances living in the same settlement (5%) (Sandu et al., 2006, p. 22). This category also includes the ethnical and/or religious networks that had a significant role in the first phases of circular migration and provided patterns of migration to Germany, Hungary (Constantin et al., 2004, p. 38). The labour

⁵ For example, leaving the country legally, staying on the territory of the destination country legally, at least for a while, work can be clandestine, and the stay may become clandestine as well etc.

migration identified at the beginning of the 1990s, characterised by the fact that migrants left the country legally and sought asylum in the destination country, and were employed while their request was being processed represents an example for the migration to Germany (Şerban and Stoica, 2007, p. 10). The same study (Şerban and Stoica, 2007, p. 10) presents another example of legal migration mediated privately, i.e. the one used in particular by Spain: migrants left the country with tourist visa, transited a country within the Schengen area for which the legal entrance conditions were met, continued their journey in a clandestine manner towards a destination found within the same area and were illegally employed on the labour market of the destination country. According to a recent sociologic study conducted by Dobrescu (2008, p. 287), most of the Romanian immigrants left for Spain to work, even if some of them do not own legal form of residence on the Spanish territory, even after the regulation of foreign citizen situation. For most of the European destinations, the travel for tourism purposes directly to the destination country and the clandestine employment were used (Şerban and Stoica, 2007, p. 11).

The courses of *the legal migration mediated privately* appeared in Romania at the beginning of 1990s, the main destination being Israel, and the migration was generally within the legal limits⁶, since migrants left the country of origin/entered the country of destination on the grounds of a legal labour. At the beginning of the 1990, 22% of the migrants found a job abroad through intermediation companies, but the importance of these company gradually decreased, reaching 11% in the stage following the year 2001 (Sandu et al., 2006, p. 23).

The courses of *the legal migration mediated by the state* imply the intervention of the state through the public institutions. By 2002 when OLFM (the Office for the Labour Force Migration) entered the labour force mediation market, the intervention of the state as mediator is deemed as minimal due to the fact the agreements that were signed were for only a few thousands of labourers per year or were bilateral agreements for the exchange of trainees. It is believed that, lately, this category of migration has focused especially on Germany and Spain (Şerban and Stoica, 2007, p. 12), and now, this manner of finding a job abroad is declining (Sandu et al., 2006, p. 23).

The courses of the *unmediated legal migration* include legal migrations for work without the intervention of a mediation agent, and the potential migrant is the one who establishes direct contact, through own resources, with the foreign employer, and negotiates and signs the contract privately. This is the case of highly-skilled migrants and may represent a course towards the countries with restrictive migration policies. Germany is deemed to be the most frequented

⁶ The legal work period may be followed by a clandestine one, which is a frequent situation for the Romanian migration in Israel or may diverge to a clandestine route, in the informal segment (Şerban, M., Stoica, M., 2007: 11).

destination for this category of migration. In other cases, for the second or third migration this category of courses may be used (it is the case of Spain and Italy), even if, for the first migration, another type of course was used (Şerban and Stoica, 2007, p. 12). In the period 1990-1995, the pattern of unsupported or non-mediated migration mediation predominated, and it is believed (Sandu et al., 2006, p. 22) that only 22% of those who left the country to work abroad during this period were helped, and the solution of asking directly the employers was constantly used by approximately 15% of the labour migrants (Sandu et al., 2006, p. 23).

Other studies (Sandu et al., 2006) identify the following four dominant courses or ways of finding a job abroad without mediation: (1) “the kinship course” (migrations to Spain); (2) “the course of the friends and relatives” (Italy); (3) “the course of the friends living abroad” (Turkey, Hungary); (4) “the course of the intermediation companies” (Germany, Israel, Greece).

It is considered that departures (to work) abroad are regionalized (Ionescu, 2008, p. 28). The migrants from Moldavia are oriented mostly towards Italy and Israel, the ones from Transylvania, towards Hungary, the Muntenia migrants towards Turkey and Bucharest ones towards Greece. In the last years, Italy became the favorite destination for all of them.

Destinations for the circular migration

At the end of 2006, the total number (urban + rural) of the residence permits held by Romanians was 324,200 in Italy. In Spain, also in 2006, there were 407,159 Romanians registered with Spanish town halls (Şerban, 2007, p. 20). The temptation to head towards one destination or another is influenced by various factors, some of which are strictly related to the specific character of the destination (Sandu et al., 2004, p. 7):

- the possibilities of communication between the point of origin and that of destination, through structured networks or other formal and informal ways;
- the accommodation resources found at the destination;
- the opinion concerning the destination country;
- the possibilities of personal and professional accomplishment at the destination;
- the personal/family rights that may be obtained at the destination.

The circular migration, irrespective of the purpose for which migrants left, was structured (Sandu, 2000, p. 19) on five major routes, the importance of which changed over time: (1) Hungary, Yugoslavia or the near West; (2) Germany or the far North-West; (3) Turkey or the near South-West; (4) Italy and Spain or the far South-West. However, the number of the destination countries is far bigger, the following being added to the above-mentioned: Austria, France, USA, Australia,

Portugal, Israel, Greece, Czech Republic, Poland, CIS, Canada, England and Ireland (Sandu, 2000). A more recent study (Sandu et al., 2006, pp. 18-19), concerning the labour migration destinations, divides the routes as follows: (1) in the first stage (1990-1995): Israel, Turkey, Italy, Hungary, Germany; (2) in the second stage (1996-2001) Canada and Spain are added; (3) in the third stage (after 2002) emigrations are concentrated on Italy and Spain.

The favourite destinations for the Romanian migrants from the rural areas were changed in each of the three delimited stages. If, in the first stage, Germany and Hungary were by far the favourite routes (Sandu et al., 2004, pp. 3-5), in 2001, the first destination was represented by Italy, followed by Hungary, Germany, Spain and Israel (Sandu, 2000, p. 20). The transition from one tendency to another was not sudden, since at the beginning of each stage, a “diffusion” of the tendencies was noticed (Sandu et al., 2004, p. 3). For example, in 2001, the main eight destinations for the inhabitants of the rural areas are, in the established order (Sandu, 2000, p. 20): Italy, Hungary, Germany, Spain, Israel, Greece, Turkey and France. The destinations of the circular migration are also analysed by specialists function of the county/region of origin of the migrants. At the level of 2001, the situation was the following (Sandu, 2000, pp. 22-23): (1) Italy is the favourite destination of the emigrants from Moldavia; (2) Turkey is preferred by the inhabitants of Dobruja and the Eastern Muntenia; (3) Germany is the main destination of the migrants from Banat, Southern Transylvania and Western Oltenia; (4) Hungary is the destination of migrants from Covasna, Harghita, Mureş, Cluj, Sălaj and Bihor; (5) Yugoslavia receives migrants from Oltenia⁷; (6) France is preferred by migrants from Maramures; (7) Spain is the destination of migrants from Bistrița Năsăud, Alba, Dâmbovița and Teleorman. Nevertheless, the situation is not that simple, because, along with these destinations, the inhabitants of these counties/regions also head towards other countries. 15 circular migration regions may be delimited, in the manner presented on the map of (Sandu, 2000, p. 24). A very important conclusion is related to the fact that 5 of these 15 regions have a unipolar orientation (over 30% of the migrants go towards the same country), the other 10 being bipolar or multipolar. The 5 regions with unipolar orientation are (Sandu, 2000, p. 24): (1) Covasna-Harghita-Mureş-Sălaj 70% towards Hungary; (2) Sibiu-Braşov - 47% towards Germany; (3) Timiş-Arad – with 32% of the migrants towards Germany; (4) Neamţ-Bacău- Vrancea-Galaţi - 41% towards Italy; (5) Constanța- Brăila-Vaslui – 32% towards Turkey.

⁷ For example, (Sandu, D. et al., 2006: 127), inhabitants of the village of Eșelnița in Mehedinți County experienced work in Serbia after 1989, and during the civil war in Bosnia and Croatia, they made clandestine transports of gas and other goods in Yugoslavia. From 2000 they continued to go to work on a seasonal basis in Serbia, this being the almost exclusive niche of a numerous community of Romani people and wandering Gypsies. The Serbian authorities estimated that in the summer of 2004 approximately 60,000 Romanian used to work in Serbia (ibidem. 130).

The same study supplies additional details concerning the secondary flows of the migration regions (Sandu, 2000). For example, the migration field of Moldavia, oriented predominantly towards Italy is mainly segmented function of the eastern or western localisation of the counties within the historical region. The north-eastern counties, Iasi, Botoşani and Suceava are dominated by the Italy-Israel configuration. On the other hand, Hungary is also included in the orientation of the migrants from the western group, Neamţ, Bacău and Vrancea, together with Italy. The migration field with predominant orientation towards Turkey is, in its turn, structured into three main regions: Constanţa-Brăila-Vaslui, Buzău-Prahova and Călăraşi-Ialomiţa. In the first group, the specific character is represented by the secondary flows towards Italy and Israel. In the second group, besides the preference for travels in Turkey, there are those associated with Spain and Italy, and in the third group, the secondary flows are oriented towards Italy and Germany. The counties of Oltenia are characterised by a rural population preponderantly oriented towards Yugoslavia and, secondarily, towards Germany and Italy. The orientation towards a destination or another of the residents of various counties/regions was also influenced by: (1) religious compatibility between the point of origin and the point of destination (Sandu, 2000, p. 26). For example, the inhabitants of western Moldavia and Catholic Transylvania were attracted by Italy; Romanian neo-protestants oriented themselves towards Germany, Spain and France; (2) ethnic affiliation, indicating the preferential migration of Hungarians towards Hungary and of the Romani people towards Germany, Yugoslavia and Spain (Sandu, 2000, p. 26).

According to T. Avrănescu (2009, p. 77), in places where there are or there have been significant share of Magyar population, the temporary migration abroad has been significantly larger than the one in places that are homogenous from the ethnic point of view. It is considered that generosity of the welfare state may act as a migration magnet across the countries of the European Union (De Giorgi and Pellizzari, 2009, p. 361). Each destination country presents certain points of "attraction" varying from one country to the other. Some of the analysed materials present case studies from which certain conclusions were drawn, as follows:

- Yugoslavia was chosen by migrants due to (Sandu et al., 2004, pp. 12, 13): the cross border migration which was a tradition from before 1989; Yugoslavian labour force migration towards Austria and Germany and the creation of vacant jobs in Yugoslavia; the facility of crossing the border by means of the "small traffic pass"⁸.
- Hungary was attractive because (Sandu et al., 2004, pp. 15, 16, 17): the Hungarians from Romania preferred to return to the native country on a temporary or permanent basis; the Romanians were preferred for household

⁸ The trans-border labour mobility involves the settlement in the Serbian communities for a period that is sufficient in order to relate in a much more complex manner than necessary for the small trade traffic (Sandu, D. et al., 2006: 130).

activities; due to the fact that Hungary was a neighbouring country, it became readily accessible in what the distance and language were concerned; the open-air markets with free access attracted small Romanian traders; it was a transit zone towards other “interesting” western countries (Germany, Austria, etc.).

- Spain⁹ was attractive due to (Sandu et al., 2004, pp. 19, 20): the lack of accurate policies and mechanisms in the migration field; the big number of jobs in areas that did not require high qualification; easy, though sometimes expensive access.

In 2001 the main occupations of the migrants from rural areas in the destination country are represented by constructions and agriculture (Sandu, 2000, p. 21). In fact, following a poll made for 2001 (Sandu, 2001, p. 4) it was established that the main purpose of the migration of more than 40% of the interviewed persons was work, between 9 and 14% declared that they migrated for work, tourism, and education, while 12 to 15 % of the interviewed persons declared that the purpose of their travel was represented, at the same time, by work and tourism, or work and education.¹⁰

Permanent migration

Legal permanent migration represents the migration flows leaving Romania and heading towards third countries in order to settle there. This was mainly made through: (1) obtaining visas through programmes for stimulation of the emigration of highly-qualified persons or through other types of programmes (visa lottery) (Nicolescu and Constantin, 2005, p. 56). The Romanian citizens emigrating on a permanent basis choose destinations such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand, USA (Constantin et al., 2004, p. 15); (2) marrying a foreign citizen (Nicolescu and Constantin, 2005, p. 56), the destination being represented both by countries in the European Union, as well as by other countries: USA, Canada, Australia (Constantin et al., 2004, pp. 15-16); (3) obtaining the status of refugee or the political asylum (Nicolescu and Constantin, 2005, p. 56), although it is estimated (Constantin et al., 2004, p. 15) that this was not the case with Romania in the last

⁹ The numbers indicate more than 400,000 Romanians who work in Spain (Simina, O.L., 2005: 13) from whom half worked legally in 2003. For Italy, the unofficial numbers are bigger – approximately 1 million in 2003 (300,000 in the official reports of MFA) and 800,000 in 2004, from whom approximately 240,000 with legal documents (Simina, O.L., 2005: 13). The Italian authorities mention 1.5 – 2.5 million Romanians, from whom 250,000 with legal documents, at the level of 2004 (Simina, O.L., 2005: 13).

¹⁰ The percentages are not fixed because the poll was made in two individual moments of the year, and consequently, the results varied.

few years (but only the case of the states in the former Yugoslavia); (4) obtaining scholarships, and never returning to the native country (Simina, 2005, p. 12).

In the period 1990-1993, referred to by some authors as the stage of the *ethnicity and religious affiliation* (Constantin et al., 2004, p. 73), it was noticed that the departures were focused on the return of the members of the German and Hungarian ethnic groups to the countries of origin of their ancestors and/or on the family reunification. The flows were from the areas with ethnic concentration, especially from Transylvania towards Germany and Hungary on one hand, and the repatriation of the Jews, on the other hand.

Illegal migration

Certain illegal aspects of the international migration phenomenon are also approached in the analysed studies. For example, the authors estimate that the illegal migration takes place in the following main ways: (1) leaving as a tourist and not returning to the country after the expiration of the legal period of stay (Simina, 2002, p. 13) or even the persons who cross the border in a fraudulent manner, enter and stay on the territory of a country illegally (Constantin et al., 2004, p. 18); (2) trafficking in human beings (Simina, 2002, p. 13-14; Constantin et al., 2004, p. 17); (3) illegal work¹¹ is practiced especially by maid servants (78%) and farmers (56%) and work was carried out in a clandestine manner particularly in Turkey and Italy; the employment in Spain was preponderantly illegal, but the gap between the legal and the illegal work was lower than in the case of Turkey and Italy (Sandu et al., 2006, p. 23).

E.M. Dobrescu mentions that there is a significant segment of Romanian citizens who, attracted by the Spanish permissive legislation, developed genuine prostitution networks, human traffic, drug traffic or auto theft networks. There can be added to all of those the groups of Romanian gipsies who are dealing with shop, car or apartment lifting. Another profitable “businesses” for the gipsies are begging and children selling (Dobrescu, 2008, p. 287). The chances of success for the illegal Romanian immigrants have dramatically diminished in the last period because most of them (approx. 90%) have nothing to expect but immediate return or detention in an immigration centre, all ending with the formalities for repatriation. Most of the times, the repatriation process interferes with the sphere of organized criminality (Predescu, 2008, p. 54).

¹¹ The numbers do not refer strictly to the situation of the migrants from the rural areas, but to the total flow of emigrants.

Conclusions

The analysis refers to the period following 1989 and up to the present and we believe that the following specifications resulting from the consulted studies are necessary: from the point of view of the migration routes the international migration phenomenon has three separate stages within the period 1990-2008, i.e.: 1990 – 1995, 1996 – 2001, 2002 – 2008 (Sandu et al., 2006, p. 18). The stages of the permanent component of the international migration may be further subdivided (Sandu et al., 2004, p. 6) function of the intensity of the migratory phenomenon. The international migration routes follow formal courses (through private or public labour placement institutions) or informal courses (on migrants' own account, sometimes in a clandestine manner). It is estimated (Constantin et al., 2004, p. 93) that the migration phenomenon will not disappear, and that it will develop new characteristics. As noticed, the EU countries are the main destinations of Romanian external migrants. The extant importance of formal and territorial sovereignty as a means of preserving the nation-state's identity explains the complexity of developing an EU immigration policy, despite the growing effects of globalization which should instigate Member States to adopt convergent immigration policies as a response to their diminished capacity to control free flows of capital and labour. (Velluti, 2007, p. 60) The author emphasizes that despite the general recognition of the need for strengthening cooperation in this area and the inadequacies of the institutional arrangements, the EU has been struggling to build a stronger Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. (Velluti, 2007, p. 61).

These findings regarding the migration of Romanians can only be completely relevant if they are considered from the broader perspective of the migration of Romanians in general, in other words, only if the internal migration is also taken into account. These findings may be surprising, due to the fact that the former migrants from the urban to the rural areas may have become the present external migrants. For these reasons, this study completes the study of the internal migration routes of the Romanians (Popescu and Bondoc, 2009).

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