THE PLANNER'S TOOLKIT: CAN WE PLAN FOR NEW TASKS USING EXISTING PROCESSES AND MECHANISMS?

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What happens when cities and regions are challenged with new tasks, and how does planning come into play? Starting out with Healey's observation of planning as a 'store' (1997: 7), this paper reviews planning strategies from various angles and different planning realms. Based on theoretical considerations, the first part presents the results of an evaluation of planning tools in central and eastern European countries. This analysis was carried out in cross-border regions, investigating how sustainability objectives can be integrated into planning practice in former socialist countries. The next part of the paper focuses on the market-oriented planning realm of the United States, showing if and how planning is able to adapt when faced with growth (Pallagst, 2007). The conclusions of the paper highlight the principle of interdependence in planning as a means to overcome fragmentation of processes and actors.

Multiple Theories in the City and Regional Planning 'Store'

"Theories can help alert us to problems, point us toward strategies of response, remind us of what we care about, or prompt our practical insights into the particular cases we confront" (Forester, 1989: 12). Forester's statement captures the essence of my approach to planning. I consider planning theory essential to understanding planning processes and growth management practices, which are broad and complex. In this regard, while planning theory mirrors planning practice the same way practice reflects theory, it is still largely unclear how theory influences planning practice, or how the spectrum of planning practice problems finds its way into theory.

Clearly, there is no one ideal planning practice just as there is no single ideal planning theory. Friedmann (1995: 157) observes that planning theory consists of many components. In his attempt to identify what he refers to as 'groups of theorists' he explains that "These groups should not be taken as alternative to each other or be seen as standing in competition for the one 'true' theory, but rather as highlighting different facets of planning in western democratic societies". Similarly, Mandelbaum (1996: xv) points out that planning practitioners deal with multiple theories when he declares: "...we are engaged by a crowded field of theories (and lay theoreticians) entangled in one another and embedded in social relations". In the words of Healey et al. (1982: 17) "Ideas and issues do filter through to practitioners, via planning education, planning literature and conferences, but in an undisciplined way. Similarly, new problems in practice filter slowly into the consciousness of academics".

When referring to a practice-theory gap in planning, Schönwandt (2002) points out that an integrated approach toward what he calls "constructs in planning" is missing, yet it should be provided by planning theory. Teitz (1996: 652) claims that planning theory's influence should not be underestimated regarding planning practice, since it "shapes the profession over time in subtle ways". These ideas are complementary to Alexander's (2001) thoughts on interdependence among planning theories. The value for this study on the planner's toolkit in two different contexts, Eastern Europe and the United States, lies in the hypothesis that the existing fragmentation of planning theories and practice approaches might be challenged by

interdependence rather than by competition of thought.

Analyses of planning theory clearly reveals a picture as multifaceted as the tasks planning practitioners have to face in everyday planning. Healey compares planning with the metaphor of a 'store' as follows:

> *Every field of endeavour has its history of ideas and practices and its traditions of debate. These act as a store of experience, of myths, metaphors and arguments, which those within the field can draw upon in developing their own contributions, either through what they do, or through reflecting on the field. This 'store' provides advice, proverbs, recipes and techniques for understanding and acting, and inspiration for ideas to play with and develop (Healey, 1997: 7).*

The many typologies that have been developed in planning theory provide an opportunity to reflect on a large number of already existing typologies and to develop a 'mix and match' classification of planning approaches that, hopefully, offers a connection to growth management practice - and thus widens the planning 'store'. As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the attempt to connect different planning theories in order to overcome fragmentation, and thus enhance the performance of planning practice, is one of the basic considerations of my theoretical approach.

There is no specific way to describe how theories influence planning practice. Here it should be noted that not every planning activity relates to one specific planning theory. Such a view would be too simple. With respect to the imprecise and rather unknown process of how planning theories find their way into planning practice, it is more appropriate to search for patterns, links or similarities between theory and practice. For this reason, one consideration should be that the framework be 'kept simple' which means that it should be communicated easily to stakeholders in practice.

Further exploration shows that, although planning has been grouped into categories before, there has been no theoretical discussion in terms of, for example, growth management approaches; the categories are more or less intuitive relying on the perceived objectives of planning. Based on the investigation of planning theories, an approach of clustering growth management activities was developed earlier by the author (Pallagst, 2007); this clustering comprising the following aspects:

1. *Regulation-oriented:* Setting limits for growth/preserving space;
2. *Incentive-oriented:* Fostering decisions;
3. *Design-oriented:* Shaping the urban environment;
4. *Collaboration-oriented:* Involving stakeholders; and
5. *Information-oriented:* Providing knowledge.

Closer examination shows the 'store' idea of planning to be diverse and somewhat disorganised. It can be characterised as something that is 'messy' – in planning terms, fragmented and highly disconnected, even comprising competing theoretical discussions. The need to provide integrated solutions for planning practice is, however, persistent. The crucial questions are:

- How does planning – procedural by nature – function today when current planning paradigms require collaboration, complex ways of thinking, and dealing with ever-changing knowledge and uncertainties?
- Which planning activities have proven successful, and which do planning practitioners prefer?

These considerations lead to the question: Which aspects should planning practitioners consider in dealing with today's multifaceted planning sphere? Embracing the metaphor of a 'store', the remainder of this paper explores the planning challenges and available instruments in the two entirely different realms of planning practice: Central and Eastern Europe, and the San Francisco Bay Area.

New Tasks and Existing Planning Tools - Examples from Central and Eastern Europe

At the end of the 1990s, planning in Central and Eastern Europe was faced with a number of challenges arising out of political, economic and societal transformations. First, there was the need to implement democratic planning processes, then there was the new requirement of applying sustainable development, and in addition – in particular in cross-border regions – the demand for participating in knowledge exchange about planning practices (Pallagst, 2000). During the early periods of the transitions in the region, there was limited understanding of how planning in these countries worked, how it would change, and how this would affect the border regions to Western Europe (Pallagst, 1995).

For this reason, the Dresden-based Institute of Ecological and Regional Development launched a project entitled "Local and regional planning instruments for sustainable spatial development in the CADSES countries (PLAIN)". This work was initiated as a transnational project involving Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Austria and set out to improve the application and the effectiveness of planning instruments for sustainable spatial development across jurisdictional boundaries. The study included the development and roll-out of sustainable planning instruments in selected regions, an evaluation of their application processes and suggestions and recommendations for their future application. Moreover, approaches to operationalising sustainability in the individual States were analysed.

The project showed that both formal and informal planning tools are an important basis for the implementation of guidelines and strategies at European level. In particular, it was demonstrated that comprehensive and – in part, at least – comparable sets of instruments exist in the participating countries but that their mode of application varies greatly, and hence has very differing results.

Studies conducted as part of the project made clear that the existing regulation or negotiation-driven set of planning tools were not always up to guaranteeing sustainable regional development in the medium or long-term. Two additional instruments were seen as necessary to supplement existing tools: financial or incentive-based mechanisms and informational tools.

Financial or finance-policy and finance-regulatory framing conditions have a particularly crucial bearing on the success and implementation of sustainable regional development. Over and above this, it was apparent that planning processes and their effectuation are dependent upon information for, and on, local planning intentions, with decisions in turn being captured, processed and made available via geographical information systems (GIS); this can facilitate efficient and speedy planning at all levels.

Furthermore, social concerns need to be considered in future scenarios as part of an integrated system. There was a need, therefore,

- To draw up practical recommendations for action at both the local and regional level with the aid of planning instruments (formal, informal, financial / incentive instruments (i.e. incentive-oriented), information-based instruments (i.e. information-oriented)); and
- To draw up indicators that can be used to monitor planning instruments for compatibility with the concept of sustainability.

Another consideration was to investigate options for implementing the targets and principles stipulated through interviews with players at regional and local level; given that this project crossed disciplinary boundaries and involved an intense exchange between scientists and those involved in local and regional planning. Once comprehensive analytical foundations had been scientifically outlined, the practical dimension was systematically established by means of surveys in cross-border case-study regions. In particular, the findings of surveys (qualitative interviews) were intended to shed light on the extent to which the planning instruments being deployed promoted sustainable development

in border regions. The following cross-border regions were selected for in-depth investigations:

- Germany/Czech Republic: Euroregion Elbe/Labe;
- Germany/Czech Republic/Poland: Euroregion Neisse-Nisa-Nysa;
- Czech Republic/Austria/Slovakia: Euroregion Weinviertel/Western Slovakia/Southern Moravia; and
- Slovakia/Poland: Euroregion Tatry.

The surveys were conducted at both the regional and local levels. With a view to obtaining differentiation within case-study regions, the choice of communities / parishes was based on: size, location and structure; the economic base to better understand the potential for dynamic development and factors that are conducive to development or militate against it; and lastly, administrative capacity.

The following results can be summarised for a number of the planning realms involved:

Czech Republic
- The planning practitioners acknowledge the principle of sustainability. Of special meaning are
  - responsible land use,
  - protection of open spaces, and
  - preservation of landscape for nature, as well as human life.
- The 'Regional area plan' is considered to be the most appropriate instrument to support sustainable development.

Slovak Republic
- The central element is the environmental aspect of sustainability.
- Aspects related to social capital were not emphasised.
- Important factors are the:
  - individual adaptation to planning situations, and
  - the quality of planning instruments.
- Comprehensive area plans are considered to be of high priority.

Poland
- Sustainability has the status of a guiding principle in planning.
- The most significant topic is protecting landscape structures.
- Of support would be the use of joint principles for handling protected open space in neighbouring countries.
- Of special significance is the monitoring of land-use changes.

Interestingly, for all countries it became clear that no additional tools are needed; rather a better and more coordinated application of the existing ones.

Immediately after the political and economic transitions took place in the region, new tasks and processes were confusing for planning practitioners, and the concept of sustainability was misused as a tool for accessing governmental or European Union (EU) funding programmes. Of growing importance were the facilitation of a wider knowledge exchange between research and practice, the application of Informal instruments, and the development of regional planning.

Growth Management: Investigations in the San Francisco Bay Area

The situation in the San Francisco Bay Area is entirely different: here, growth pressure puts the region's quality of life at risk. For this reason, since the beginning of the 1970s, growth management approaches have been introduced in the San Francisco Bay Area's cities and counties. According to the stakeholders included in the investigation, no 'high tide' of growth management can be identified. Rather, initiating growth management was related to a wide variety of activities, again showing no concentration on one specific tool, but rather fragmentation.

In the mid-2000s, I carried out interviews with stakeholders involved in growth management in the region to evaluate growth management tools. The interviews made clear that, by the middle of the 1990s, all communities had some experience with

growth management. It also became obvious that there seemed to be a lack of consistency and, as such, fragmentation in growth management approaches.

Moreover, different approaches to growth management can be noticed over time; ranging from containment (limit lines), to inner city approaches (infill and transit orientation) to regional development (Livability Footprint Project - Association of Bay Area Governments, 2002). Growth management was also following changing patterns in the location of sprawl (see Figure 1), starting in the city of San Francisco and moving to adjacent suburbs to the south and north towards the East Bay.

Figure 1: Sprawl created the suburban town Foster City

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Most of the interviewees stated that administrative boundaries, either of cities, counties, or the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, do not represent planning issues that support growth management.

Rather, when put within the larger regional context, it is important to create a balance between urban centres and the use of land in a broader region.

In many cases, the growth management approach was initiated by citizens. Their cities and neighbourhoods changed rapidly with the enormous suburban growth in the San Francisco Bay Area during the 1950s and 1960s. Most of the cities that experienced sprawl were located in rural areas, and transformed into suburban residential 'bedroom communities'[1] for the city of San Francisco. Today, citizens' concerns for limiting growth are often related to the fear of changes in their neighbourhood, and to safety issues. Preserving the environment through growth management eventually became recognised as a way for citizens to disguise their NIMBY (not in my backyard) attitude.

In terms of counties and cities, costs related to infrastructure provision, such as schools, water and sewer, are the primary reason for employing growth management. Though infill development and dense land-use patterns require less funding for infrastructure, the efficient delivery of services becomes essential. In some cases, traffic congestion is the main reason for using growth management tools. In other cases, water supply restricts the expansion of a city. High land costs also give developers an incentive to consider high-density development, prompting great motivation for planners to apply growth management related tools as outlined below.

Regulation-Oriented Tools
Some of the jurisdictions involved are not using urban growth boundaries as a regulatory tool; mainly because it has not traditionally been their policy to do so, or because they did not have the space to grow outward and, therefore, do not need a limit line. For many cities, however, an urban growth boundary is the major growth management tool. Most of the boundaries were brought up by voter initiatives during the 1990s, which shows the growing influence of stakeholders within the

planning process. Usually, growth boundaries are implemented for a period of twenty years, but a few cities have established permanent boundaries. The following examples illustrate the differences in application of urban growth boundaries in different cities.

San José
In San José, the most important tool is the Urban Green Line, a permanent growth boundary. However, the city has sufficient growth reserves within this line (see Figure 2). The Green Line policy has been widely criticised, as it foresees a new large high-tech development in a rural area, which creates land-use conflicts (Matthews, 2002). While the development

would enhance the city's jobs-housing balance, it would consume a large amount of open space.

Napa
The city of Napa's growth boundary is called the Rural Urban Limit Line (RUL). In this case, there is only very limited space to grow within the boundary. The purpose of this boundary is, therefore, to preserve the high-quality agricultural land of Napa Valley's wine areas. In this region, agriculture is a major economic factor in terms of product and tourism.

Petaluma
Petaluma is one of the pioneers of growth

Figure 2: The Urban Green Line, San José
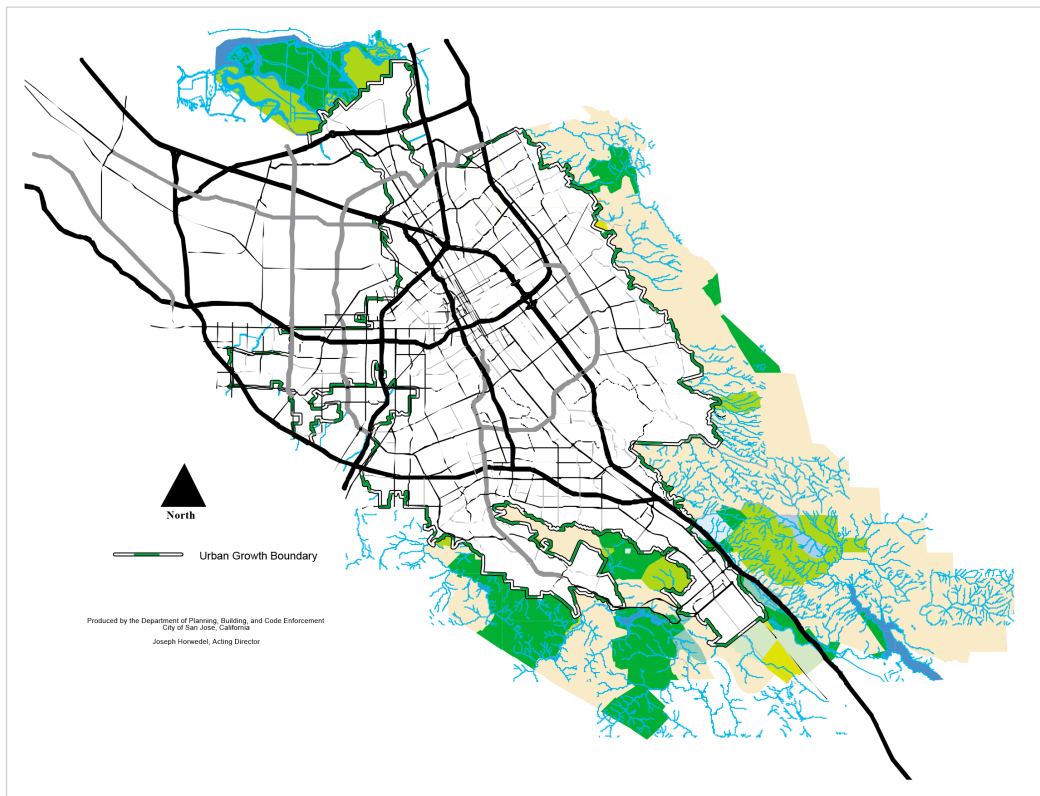
Source: City of San José, Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

management in California. The city of Petaluma changed its policy during the 1990s by creating an urban growth boundary on the basis of the city's green belt, which was established during the 1970s. This policy change towards the growth boundary was enforced by voter initiative.

County Approaches
In Marin County, the entire county is divided into three parts: the city-centred corridor, the inland rural corridor, and the coastal recreation corridor. The city-centred corridor line separates urban from rural areas on a county-wide scale. An urban growth boundary is also in use in Santa Clara County, but it is stated to be a more theoretical idea, as water and sewer aspects managed with the urban service area are more important. Interestingly, in Alameda County the urban growth boundary is considered a good tool in dealing with disputes with developers or farmers who want to sell their land on for development.

A remarkable example is Contra Costa County, which incorporated an urban limit line in 1990. In the year 2000, the limit line was moved closer to the cities in one area, which is an unusual move; the 'normal' approach is to expand urban growth boundaries along with a city's development. The county's procedure was strongly opposed, but it found the voters' approval. The general plan for the County clearly states that the urban limit line is an enforcement tool to maintain 65/35 land preservation; thus, this is a plan that limits urban uses to 35 percent of the County's land area, with the remaining 65 percent in non-urban uses such as agriculture, open spaces and parks.

Inter-jurisdictional and regional cooperation were mentioned by almost all cities and counties. However, many of the activities are informal and are comprised of a form of loose cooperation. These efforts are deemed not very intense, and always voluntary. The aim is to identify mutual interests rather than solve problems. It was referenced by many stakeholders that, in practice, there are numerous meeting groups, but the results of them are not always visible.

Several more programmatic examples, following a participatory approach, have been established at regional and county levels. Firstly, the *Smart Growth Strategy – Regional Livability Footprint Project* was initiated by the Association of Bay Area Governments in 1998 to handle growth-related problems like traffic congestion and lack of affordable housing on a regional scale. Secondly, Contra Costa County launched *Shaping Our Future* in 2003, a new programme to support county growth management decision-making over the next twenty years.

As for categories of planning tools, the following conclusions can be drawn from the interviews:

• Regulation seems to be the first choice for stakeholders when it comes to growth management; and
• Participants widely referred to the effectiveness of regulatory tools in growth management practice.

For this reason, a large number of planning activities are geared to support this approach. However, there was consensus that regulation has its limits, and thus, must be accompanied by another set of growth management tools.

Incentive-Oriented Tools
The incentive-oriented toolset is also deemed to be of some relevance. Incentives are important when it comes to supporting planning processes. They can, for example, greatly influence the decision-making of developers and citizens. Incentives were, however, also viewed critically since they bear the potential to undermine other regulatory policies already in place.

Design-Oriented Tools
Stakeholders believed the design-oriented approach will have growing importance. Though some indicated the approach to be rather effective, others pointed to design as a relevant tool for influencing people's perceptions about additional urban development. For this reason, design might be used as an incentive to support other growth management policies such as higher density.

Collaboration-Oriented Tools

Collaboration was deemed relevant when working with citizens, neighbourhood groups, developers and other interest groups (e.g. environmental groups). However, it was only considered useful when the parties involved are not too far apart in their standpoints.

Information-Oriented Tools

Stakeholders considered the information-oriented approach – particularly educating citizens about development patterns or visioning processes – to be of growing relevance, though with the caveat that information tools must be handled with care because, although they can be highly persuasive, the information imparted is often politically influenced rather than impartial. While GIS was widely applied on all planning levels, the interviewees had different experiences with it. They found their access to GIS technical information often limited by planning departments' financial and time constraints.

In sum, the stakeholders interviewed widely agree that tools for growth management are available, but that coordination between different approaches is lacking. Some activities are even deemed inflexible when employed individually – as with the use of urban growth boundaries, for example. Thus, the combination of growth management activities used is important.

Most stakeholders advocate for a programme-based approach that integrates all of the categories mentioned above. This broadly supports the idea of interdependence in planning practice and theory. However, participants also pointed to a lack of knowledge about which elements an interdependent approach should comprise, and how they should be weighted.

Conclusions: On the Way to Interdependence in Planning

Viewed from a planning tools perspective, planning practice during the early stages of the political and economic transformations in Central and Eastern Europe was unsure of how to apply available instruments; while in the San Francisco Bay Area planning practice is clearly fragmented. Stakeholders interviewed in both planning realms indicated that they are overwhelmed by the efforts required to create a well-tailored set of activities. Interviewed participants also professed the importance of connecting planning strategies – with the emphasis being on linking the existing ones in an interdependent way, rather than bringing about new activities.

In the spirit of building a sense of interdependence in planning, there is a need for:

a) Regional Interdependence;
b) Interdependence of Planning Activities; and
c) Interdependence between Stakeholders.

Regional Interdependence

The regional approach to interdependence is based on the understanding that development is taking place at a scale larger than a single community. This approach has been emphasised in European planning for many years. Growth management on a regional scale has gained awareness in the US as well; with stakeholders widely agreeing that planning can cause negative impacts / outcomes for metropolitan regions when it is directed and applied only on the local level. The interviews reveal that state and regional governments should exert stronger influence in defining local planning practice.

This regional interdependence approach can only be achieved with the active involvement, and thus approval, of local jurisdictions. Hence, they must perceive a benefit to participation in regional planning efforts. For regional programmes to achieve success, trust among the stakeholders must be ensured, and the benefits and responsibilities of all participants in any regional exercise of collaboration must be clarified.

Interdependence of planning activities

Planning is, to a great extent, a complex and

fragmented endeavour. If the requirements of dealing with fragmentation in planning are to be incorporated into an interdependent approach, several aspects must be considered. First, the fragmented set of planning activities and the experiences that exist in practice should be regarded as a good basis for interdependence. Moreover, a planning framework is needed that does not react in response to short-term political requirements, but combines future-oriented visioning, pro-active policy-making, thorough implementation and in-depth evaluation. A creative as well as – admittedly – a complex mix of regulative tools, incentives, design features, collaborative exercises and information should be embedded in this interdependent path.

The selection process of new activities, which are constantly evolving in planning, should be handled with care; techniques from the planning 'store' should not be simply added, but customised to the specific planning requirements of the community, county or region. This is based on the 'store' metaphor in planning discussed earlier in this paper, yet the advancement lies in the careful tailoring of activities, while taking their interdependence into consideration.

Interdependence between stakeholders

According to Innes (1991: 16) planning and growth management

> presents a particularly challenging task of linking knowledge and action. It requires many kinds of knowledge – from facts and predictions about growth patterns and relationships among activities, to knowledge of interests and values of players and practical understandings of how things work. The knowledge must, moreover, help to change the behaviour of a wide variety of players. The task is particularly problematic because the issues at stake – property rights, land-use control, quality of life – have important symbolic and emotional meanings.

For example, citizens' attitudes towards higher density development and the quality of an

urban lifestyle, oriented to transit and walkable destinations, can be ambivalent; yet the need to consider these issues is important as part of growth management strategies. Planning practitioners must engage in pro-active approaches, which do not override citizens' or developers' concerns about the type, mode and location of development. Interdependence among stakeholders also aims to bring together a broad range of people in a joint learning process to achieve consensus on the planning activities to be applied. Carefully conducted visioning processes to simultaneously develop and promote planning objectives could be a start for policy-making. Stakeholders should be aware, however, that when they create a vision, they are making choices that are likely to affect other sectors. Local jurisdictions cannot foresee development at the urban fringe and protect open space at the same time.

A diverse spectrum of citizens should be involved in planning exercises at all stages to achieve broad consensus. Emphasis should be placed on engaging representatives of all relevant groups of the community, not only the "usual suspects" to sustain the requirements of social equity.

When determining who should be in charge of interdependence in growth management, planners' capability and expertise should be considered. Planners can assume a complex, dual role, not only acting as moderators in the planning process, but also applying their specific skills and knowledge. The latter should be shared actively with all other stakeholders in planning. For planners to ably undertake such roles would certainly require modification in planning education.

Planning practice requires more than a technical style; it also needs a style that is pro-active, undertakes development challenges, and defines new modes of development. Whether planning is ready to develop a toolset or 'store' in a sense of interdependence is unclear; more attempts in this regard, however, would certainly be helpful.

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Endnotes

[1] Bedroom communities are suburban towns or cities whose inhabitants commute long distances to work and return daily to sleep in their homes, while all other activities are spent elsewhere (shopping, recreation, higher education).

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