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Astract of the doctoral dissertation

*External migration of the population from Cluj county,
following Romania's integration in the European Union*

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Keywords: *transnational and circulatory migration; social capital and networks of migration; emigrational strategies; labor force migration; brain drain; brain waste; culture of migration; evolution, counter-evolution and migration; the principle of comparison.*

Summary

The **major objective** of the dissertation consists in the identification of the patterns of the external migration occurring in Cluj county during the recent past (following Romania's European integration). Obviously, the study of this period is linked to the volumes and patterns of migration flows occurring in Romania, before the year 2007. Thus, in my thesis I dedicated specific chapters to the description and analysis of the emigrational phenomenon occurring both on the level of the country and the county in the last decade. I tried to present a range of data concerning the complex and differentiated pattern of the reasons and consequences of migration, both in terms of regional and economic- and socio-demographic aspects (age, gender, education, skill, residence).

My individual research consists in three empirical studies which are a combination of *quantitative* (survey and secondary analysis of statistical data) and *qualitative* (interviews, focus groups and observations) methods and thus allow for methodological triangulation.

The practical objectives of the research consisted in the following aspects:

The analysis of the data resulted from the two field research (based on the methods of survey and interview) from the viewpoint of the most adequate theoretical approaches. Throughout my research I followed the *methodological principle of comparison*. This principle was practiced in the following manner: the comparison of the results based on the surveys from urban and rural settings from Cluj county with the recent emigrational trends occurring on country-level (statistical data and surveys); the comparison of the external migration in the case of two counties situated in two different regions of socio-economic development (Cluj county in the Nord-West region and Suceava county in the Nord-East region) but having very similar numbers of inhabitants. In order to bring a deeper insight, I realized a comparative case study in two villages (Iara and Brodina) from the two counties and I tried to identify not only the models of emigration from these two villages as a function of migrants' motivations and specificities of emigrational networks, but also the consequences of emigration on the life of these two villages.

The complex exhaustive analysis of the Romanian emigrational phenomenon from the last years has been approached through a focus group conducted with experts of the migration phenomenon. The diverse backgrounds of the participant experts constituted an important advantage in terms of the final interpretation of the data.

By using the theories and model of migration, which are described in the chapters of the dissertation, and by synthesizing the results of the empirical studies, I succeeded to extract some specific conclusions based on which I constructed several strategies of interpretation on the emigrational phenomenon from both Cluj county and Romania in general.

Synthesis of the chapters

I structured the text of my dissertation in several sections and chapters:

I. A first, theoretical and descriptive part which includes three chapters.

The first two chapters offer a large **theoretical framework** for the phenomenon of migration; in these chapters migration is approached as a complex phenomenon which can be interpreted as a dynamic and global action which has effects on several aspects of both the society and the individual. The most important **theories and models** are presented following three levels: macro-social level; mezo-social level and micro-social level. A part of the theories and models of analysis (i.e. cost-benefit analysis; social capital and networks; the new economy of migration, etc.) have been used during the interpretation of the empirical results from the second part of the thesis.

The third chapter constitutes a transitory section between the first two chapters and my personal research and it deals with the **statistical evolution of the Romanian migration** by summarizing the most important Romanian research contributions from the field. Based on these data I showed that nowadays there is a category of states (developed, stable and meritocratic) which are in the need of skilled workforce and who, thus, will live for long years away from their home countries. Another category of states are those from the Western part of the continent which are in need of less skilled workforce in several domains of activities (e.g., agriculture, construction, care, etc.) and such workforce usually will inhabit the receiving country only for a shorter period. Those Romanians who are practicing the circular migration between their home and receiving countries are parts of this second type of migration. The research on migration estimates that 55% of the Romanian immigrants from their European receiving countries live and work illegally in these Western states. Thus, a huge part of the Romanian emigrants are not captured in statistical data; they do not change their residence legally and are not beneficiaries of legal work contracts.

Before Romania's integration in the European Union, the research on the Romanian emigration showed that temporary migrants corresponded to the following three major categories of workforce: highly skilled workforce, aged 25 – 40; medium skilled workforce with specializations in the domains of constructions (Germany), health (Italy, USA, Canada, Switzerland), hotel services and public alimentation (the Western European market); and low

skilled workforce in the fields of agriculture, sanitation and construction (Spin, Portugal, Greece). The research on the Romanian migration talks also about several other trends and peculiarities of the emigrational flows – these are also discussed and presented in this chapter.

II. The second part of the dissertation includes the description of the personal empirical research.

The fourth chapter includes a **quantitative research in connection with the external emigration from Cluj county**. The first section of this chapter is a statistical description of the county-level evolution of the migration, especially from the period starting in 2007, i.e. the period after Romania became a member state of the European Union. These data offer a background for understanding the county-level context from the perspective of its emigrational status and potential.

The second section of the chapter presents the empirical research based on a survey applied on a theoretical representative sample from urban and rural settings of the county (336 questioned persons). Following the statistical operationalization of this survey, I succeeded to reach the proposed objectives of the research.

In connection with the first objective concerning the ranking of the reasons of emigration, the results showed some results which are very similar to those trends which have been already signalled by national samples. Thus:

1) the most important three motivations of migration are related to *basic aspects of the existence* and represent *financial and materialistic* motivations followed by the need to ensure *a better and more secure future for the family*. Such ranking reflects, in fact, that respondents *perceive that Romania offers a low standard of living and weak possibilities for personal development in the future*.

2) *The next four motivations of migration* indicate attitudes which correspond to *the intention of development and social affirmation, professional development and need for consolidating personal relationships*.

3) The last three types of motivations reflect a different set of attitudes which are linked to *the need to exploit new spaces; to the self image* and the need to take an active attitude in the face of a society which offers weak possibilities and *to develop as a citizen in a more democratic society*:

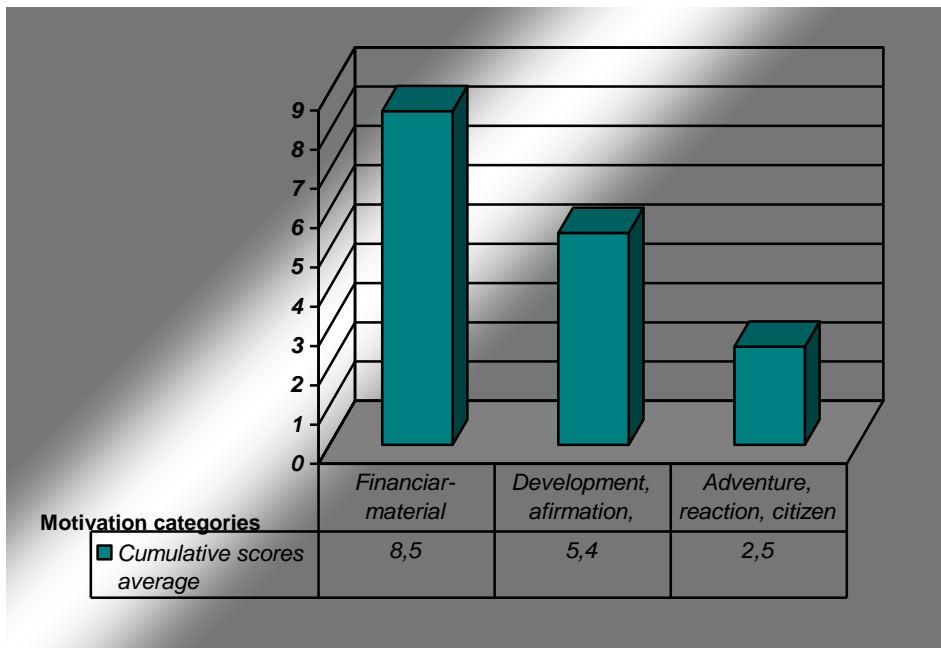


Figure 1. Hierarchy of the cumulative scores by three categories of motivations

In connection with this research I concluded that it seems that emigration constitutes, in a great part, a response to the social crisis, a strategy of survival and only in a smaller part it is an option based on the need to exploit new possibilities. Thus, migration is much more a materialistic option than a post-materialistic strategy linked to higher needs. The Romanian emigration, and particularly that from Cluj county is a measure of crisis-management taken by the individuals and families.

The statistical analysis on the effects of the individual independent variables (age, gender, education, residence, emigrational status) on the ranking of the emigrational motivations showed that: 1) As a function of gender we can speak about significant differences only in terms of ranking the following three motivations: material reasons; a new chance in life and exercising democratic rights (in the case of men each of these three aspects have higher scores). These differences can be explained by the different gender roles, while the fact that there were not statistically significant differences in the ordering of the other seven motivations of the migration – even in the case of motives in connection with the family, personal relations, professional development and prestige, adventure seeking, etc. – can be interpreted as a sign of generational replacement and as a sign of changing mentalities.

2) *In terms of age*, my analysis showed that the most active age group in connection with migration is that ranged between 35-50 years old and this is the age group which is most concerned with the pecuniary aspects of life.

3) In what concerns *education level*, I found three significant differences in connection with the following motivations: material-financial; a better future for the family and professional development, however no matter which is the educational background of the respondents, the analysis showed that individuals use to realize an efficient calculus of the chances when they opt for emigration.

4) *Place of residence* determines the variation of motives which determine migration. One motivation which is significantly different as a function of place of residence is the *lack of perspectives*, being followed by *a better future for the family* and by that of *material-financial motivations*. In my thesis I discussed such differences in terms of urban-rural inequalities (economical development, level of education, lack of opportunities in the rural settings, etc.).

5) The *emigrational experience* has configured two subgroups, those with and those without emigrational experience. Between these two groups the most important difference occurs in connection with the motivations referring to the *lack of perspectives in the country*; *disappointment with the Romanian society* and, finally, in connection with *material-financial motives*. Those with emigrational experience have a more acute perception in connection with the lack of perspectives in the country, they show a higher degree of disappointment with the Romanian society and state and attach a higher importance to the financial advantages of migration than those who do not have experience in migration. I also found that emigrational experiences raise the odds of expectations (but also that of frustrations) associated with migration.

The second and third objectives of the research consisted in revealing the *intentions, respectively ways of emigrations* of those respondents who declared that they intend to take part in emigration. The trends revealed on the level of this subsample shows that:

- The great majority of the respondents intend to go *for work* abroad.
- *The influence of socio-demographic variables on the three ways of emigration* (for work, for familial/personal reasons, for professional development) seemed congruent with that showed in the literature. The interpretation of data occurred through the lenses of well-known theories: rational-choice (cost-benefit) theory, theory of social capital and the new economy of migration.
- The concrete way in which emigrants intend to leave indicates *a high degree of informality in approaching migration*: similarly to other studies, my research showed

that migrants opt for informal networks in order to reduce the costs of migration and to ensure a familial and communitarian support in their destination countries.

- I observed several relevant differences as a function of place of residence and level of education. These variables influence the type of work for which respondents opt, the incomes of migrants, the manners in which migration *per se* occurs, how stable the migration is going to be, how migrants maintain the relations with their family members, etc.

At the end of this part of research I constructed *a theoretical profile of the working emigrant from Cluj county*, as a function of statistical patterns of the potential migrants from the original sample. Such profile shows that the theoretical type of migrant is: younger, both man and women, especially with medium level education, especially from rural settings and relies on informal networks when he/she decides to emigrate.

The *limits of the research* can be summarized as follows: a) the theoretical representation of the total sample and the problems linked with the small volume of the subsample of potential migrants determine to adopt a careful view in terms of generalizations of the results. However, the exploratory character of the research, as well as the comparison of these data with other county and national level statistics can bring substance to my data and help us to consider the previous impediment as a minor one; b) in interpreting the data I referred also to the distortions due to social desirability (Ilut, 1997); c) the cumulative effect of several independent variables could be skipped through a more nuanced analysis of data. However, given the low number of subjects in each category, I considered that a more complex analysis of data would not been statistically relevant, so that I decided to use a more brute operation with the data.

The fifth chapter contains a comparative case study in connection with the external migration from two counties, Cluj and Suceava. By using the principle of comparison, this study intended to reveal from the macro (the comparison of statistical trends from the two counties in regional contexts) to the micro (qualitative-analytic) the particular contexts of emigration in two villages (Iara – from Cluj county and Brodina – from Suceava county).

The method of comparison was a mixed methodology and consisted in *quantitative* (primary and secondary analysis of statistical data and a questionnaire called Household Survey applied on the level of a sample consisting in a total of 200 households, i.e. 100 households in each village, divided in turn in two types of households: those with and those

without experience of migration) and *qualitative* (interviews with ten subjects with migration experience) methods. The most important theories which guided my approach were the new theory of migration, theories in connection with human capital, variants of the migrants' network theories as well as other directions of interpretations (cost-benefit approaches, culture of migration, life strategies, etc.).

I showed that *the two regions of development* to whom Cluj and Suceava counties belong, constitute emigrational contexts which experienced different flows in different years. The common element in both regions, in accordance with the national situation, is that following the European Union membership, the migration of the population tends to be circulatory. If we compare the situation of the population from the two counties between 2002 and 2012, we can see that Cluj county has witnessed a population loss due to migration of 6% (which is a low percent compared to the national average), while Suceava county has witnessed a loss of 10%, which is a moderately high tendency of de-population, and with this loss the county is situated on the third place among the counties from Moldova region as number of emigrants.

The main conclusions of the statistical comparisons show that the situation of those who left permanently from Cluj county is representative for the phenomenon of *brain drain*, since the majority of those who left the county without the intention to return are highly educated. In contrast, the case of Suceava county reflects the phenomenon of *the need for qualified workforce* (the most active emigrants are those who are medium level educated):

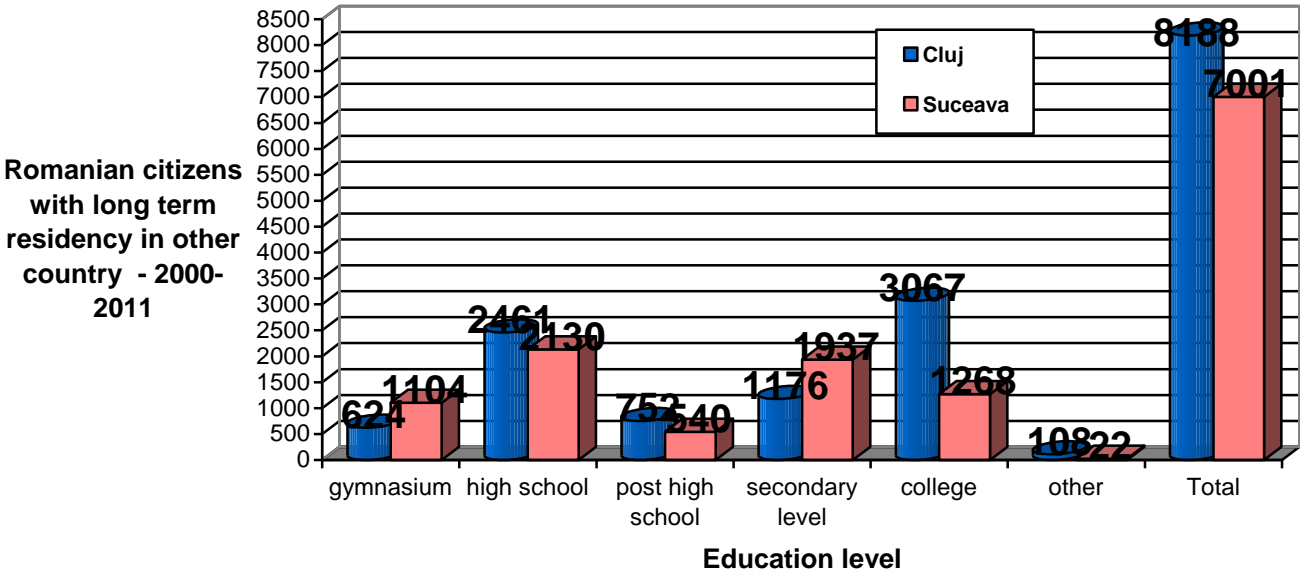


Figure 2. Number of Romanian citizens (permanency form) with the residency in other country for the 2000-2011 decade – comparison between Cluj and Suceava counties, by education level

Thus, on the level of the two *counties* it was validated the hypothesis concerning the loss of social and human capital, through the phenomenon of migration. It was showed also that *the material-financial dimension constitutes the most important determinant of migration*, but it is coupled with a calculus regarding the costs and benefits of migration.

The fact that after Italy and Spain, the most important number of Romanian migrants have as their destination countries Canada, USA and Great Britain, gives importance to the explanation in terms of favourite countries of destinations as a function of migrants' skills. However, it is important to note that, on a statistical level, the typical profile of the Romanian migrant is not that of a highly skilled person. On the contrary, the Romanian migrant is a worker in the construction, agriculture, services, etc. and such migrants come especially from rural settings.

By comparing the demographic, socio-economic and cultural contexts of the two villages, Iara (Cluj county) and Brodina (Suceava county), I showed that there exist differences in the volumes, periods and types of migration between these two localities. Thus, it seems that in Brodina the flows of new departures have diminished, in spite that there are no signs of diminishing of the emigrational phenomenon *per se*. In Iara I observed that there is a significant category of the population which have gone abroad, here exist stabile networks of emigration which help to the wellbeing of the households and community in general and lowers the emergence of new waves of external migrants.

The comparisons between households with and without emigrational experience shows that emigration constitutes an attractive phenomenon for those who have no experience in migration. However, the push factors in connection with the international labour market determine them to not to take into consideration the choice of emigrating.

The comparison of the data resulted from the **quantitative** (official data, Household Survey) **study** allowed to contour the general conclusion that the circulatory migration for working reasons has a) positive effects: remittances which generated wealth in the case of households with emigrational experience and stimulated the entrepreneur spirit among these citizens; b) negative effects in terms of population loss, especially in what regards young individuals and social problems like higher divorce rates, children left with the kinship and associated psychological frustrations.

It must be noted also that remittances and the wealth they generate can determine a growing inequality between households with and those without migration experience (Anghel, 2009), but also the fact that migration determines a change in values and behaviours in what regards citizenship, women's emancipation, etc. (Vlase, 2008 – apud Anghel, 2011).

The qualitative research, besides several peculiarities has evidenced several general results as well:

- The important factors in connection with migration as a life strategy and in determining emigrational flows are represented by kinship networks and friends-based networks which act as safety nets for newcomers; such social capital based networks are important constituents of migration especially in the case of rural migrants. Thus, we can confirm *the relevance of the social capital theory, particularly that of social networks (informal) in sustaining and developing the international labour migration.*
- The second conclusion is that *the differences between the two villages are not rooted in cultural aspects, but are much more linked to the social-economic development of the two contexts, i.e. to structural factors (labour market, unemployment, levels of incomes, etc.) and also to a delay in connection with the formation and saturation of migrant networks.*
- Another conclusion indicates that in spite of the fact that international organizations, governments and private actors see remittances as an ideal vehicle for economic development, our data show that remittances are invested in micro-level aspirations (e.g. mundane consumption) and only a small part of the remittances are converted in long term investments (de Haas, 2009 – apud Anghel, 2011). In spite that on the level of declarations, households with emigrational experience are oriented towards economic goals and investments, the prophecy of returning to their home country with money to be invested in economic activities can not be confirmed.
- In connection with respondents' future plans, their declarations sustain the idea that in the forthcoming years, there will occur a lowering of the emigrational flows for labour migration. It seems that right now, labour migration has reached its saturation level and indicates an equilibrium between the push and pull factors in the case of the households from both villages.

The hypotheses in connection with the Iara – Brodina comparative research has been verified as follows:

A) Regarding the results in connection with the profile of the emigrant from the two villages it was revealed that a) those who left from Iara usually gave up an existent, however not well paid job in the country and started a new work in a new country; b) those from Brodina usually changed their inactive status (unemployment) for a job abroad.

Based on the analysis and correlation of results it was confirmed the hypothesis that 1) the profile of the labour emigrant has slightly changed, it does not correspond to that from the first flows of migration (young, man, secondary education). Our dominant profile is young, man, with medium level education, married or unmarried, employed in the field of construction. We have also a second profile: woman, young, unmarried or married with children left with the kinship, with medium level education, employed abroad in the field of hotel services.

B) The results based on the Household Survey sustain the second hypothesis anchored in the new economy of migration: the emigration has created new opportunities for households with emigrational experience from rural settings to anchor themselves in economic activities, at least compared to the households without emigrational experience. However, it was also signalled the ambivalent situation linked to the balance of positive and negative effects of migration on the level of development. I agree with A. Portes (2009), according to whom state politics is essential in sustaining the positive effects of migration and minimizing the negative effects. However, as Anghel (2011) observes, the Romanian state is a passive actor in front of the massive emigration of its citizens. Thus, the second hypothesis must be considered within this contextual-analytic framework.

C) It was confirmed ***a third hypothesis***: in both localities, remittances are oriented towards family level developments.

D) From the interviews and field research it seemed realistic a fourth hypothesis: in the case of families with emigrational experience there were not meet clear intentions towards investing outside the family, household, i.e. there were not meet intentions to help the development of the local community.

We can conclude that the most important characteristic in terms of migration's effects is that migration has produced a social restructuring in the original localities and gave rise to a real "culture of migration" in several rural communities.

The limits of this mixed study are the following: a) the difficulty to obtain exact data based solely on subjects' declarations or based on the official numbers concerning the

migrants requires the need to triangulate the data and, in this way we can rise the confidence of the research; b) the survey describes the trends based on subjects' opinions, so that the results must be seen as having a distortion due to social desirability; c) in the two villages I met subject who, for sure, have presented a pretty biased picture on their migration experience or intention; such distortions have as a root subjects' inherent need to present themselves in a better way or, even the fact that they did not want to tell the true story about their migration, about their exact position in the receiving countries' labour market, etc.

The **sixth chapter** comprises the **results of the focus group discussion conducted with experts** about the evolutions and effects of the migration phenomenon. The method of investigation tried to extrapolate the final interpretations and to understand the phenomenon as a whole and to seek solutions for diminishing its effects through macro- and mezo-level policies and individual strategies. Once we group the major themes of the discussion we can delimit four major themes which can be summarized in the form of the following conclusions:

Once we look at *the trajectory and specificity of the Romanian external migration phenomenon from a multi-disciplinary perspective*, the experts discussed about the demographic aspects of the migration which were linked to sub-themes like the problems of the migration itself, to politics and policies, to entrepreneur activities, institutional crisis and crisis of local and global identity, to the reproduction of poverty through the migration of the low skilled working force, brain drain, etc.

The synthetic results of the discussion about *the balance between the positive and negative consequences of the short, medium and long term migration* have revealed as *positive effects* the following: remittances; well-being of the family, the import of the Western pattern of values and education, changes in the way of life and civic attitudes of the Romanian migrants and a better self-appreciation. Among the *negative effects* were mentioned the following: the loosing of the working force, demographic loss, brain drain, a false social development; effects concerning the children remained without their parents for shorter or longer periods of time; the infiltration of the black economy into the process of migration and problems linked to defining a proper identity.

In connection with *the types of migration*, the experts have identified the following aspects: a) *Long-term or final migration* in the case of citizens who are highly skilled, especially in the domains of IT research and medicine (i.e. brain drain); young people with medium level education and proper skills who reach their receiving country through networks of social capital are also susceptible for long term or final emigration; b) *temporary migration*

– in the case of youngsters who are lower educated and do not have work qualification, and are residents of context of poverty. A particular case is represented by those, especially Roma individuals who are practicing a kind of emigrational tourism and are seeking social services and benefits.

The possible solutions (macro-, mezo-, micro-level) in order to diminish the negative effects of the migration were outlined in the following manner: a) *On the macro-level*: policies of absorption and benefits on the Romanian labour market; policies of opportunity creations in terms of equal chances; public policies based on the explorations of the migration's push and pull factors; a better information change between specific branches of the government and its institutions in order to can better coordinate the demographic, political and economic aspects of migration; b) *On the mezo-level*: public and communitarian policies and collaboration with the non-governmental actors; policies and initiatives which aim to sustain local economies; policies adapted to specific communities which are targeting the specific needs of groups or individuals; c) *On the micro-level*: social policies which aim to remediate the dysfunctional situation linked to migration (children, family, problems of the Roma population); strategies of collaboration between specialists and institutions in order to solve particular problems and cases.

Based on the results of the focus group discussion I conclude that the long term negative consequences should be dealt with sustained policies with an accent on the mezo-social (i.e. communitarian) level where populations can have specific needs as a function of the contexts in which they live. I think that we are in the need of specialists in order to identify the best ways for harmonizing the individual and familial level needs with that occurring on the societal level. In the same time, the adaptation of several good practices existing in other states with similar socio-economic characteristic and emigrational evolution could serve also as a starting point for more efficient policies of migration.

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