

Research on the Path Selection of Rural Revitalization in Resource

-- Based cities in Sichuan Province

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ABSTRACT

The rural revitalization strategy is a major decision and deployment made by the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, aiming to accelerate the realization of agricultural and rural modernization. It covers various aspects of revitalization, including industry, talents, culture, ecology, and organizations, and promotes each other, which helps solve the "three rural issues", promotes urban-rural integrated development, and achieves balanced and sustainable economic development. Resource-based cities in Sichuan Province have long been facing problems such as resource exhaustion, ecological deterioration and insufficient industrial momentum, and the rural revitalization strategy has brought new opportunities for its development. The choice of rural revitalization paths for resource-based cities in Sichuan Province is a topic worthy of in-depth research. At present, these regions face many challenges in promoting the rural revitalization strategy. They need to systematically analyze existing problems and learn from successful domestic and foreign experiences in order to effectively promote the implementation of the strategy. Through multi-angle discussion, it can provide a practical and feasible development path for the rural revitalization of resource-based cities in Sichuan Province.

KEYWORDS

Rural revitalization; Resource-based city in Sichuan Province; Path selection

1. INTRODUCTION

In response to the challenges facing rural development in China and in line with the need for coordinated social harmony and development, the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China decided to implement the "Rural Revitalization Strategy" to accelerate the modernization of agriculture and rural areas [1].

As a region rich in mineral resources, Sichuan Province has long relied on the extraction and primary processing of natural resources for the economic growth of its resource-based cities. Currently, it faces multiple challenges including dwindling resource reserves, declining ecological carrying capacity, and insufficient momentum for industrial transformation and upgrading. There is an urgent need to establish a new development paradigm through the optimization and restructuring of its industrial system. The introduction of the rural revitalization strategy has provided these cities with new development approaches, aiming to alleviate population outflow and industrial decline by promoting rural economic growth, thereby achieving balanced regional economic development. This strategy not only improves the ecological environment and enhances residents' quality of life but also drives the economic restructuring of resource-based cities and fosters emerging industries. For instance, it promotes the development of modern agriculture and rural tourism, thereby advancing

coordinated urban-rural development. Moreover, the path selection for rural revitalization in resource-based cities of Sichuan Province holds significant theoretical and practical implications for exploring sustainable development pathways. This approach not only benefits the region itself but also provides valuable experience for other similar areas. Therefore, conducting in-depth research on the pathways for rural revitalization in resource-based cities in Sichuan Province holds profound implications for promoting economic transformation, improving the ecological environment, enhancing residents' quality of life, achieving balanced regional development, and exploring sustainable development paths.

2. CHALLENGES FACING RURAL REVITALIZATION IN RESOURCE-BASED CITIES IN SICHUAN PROVINCE

2.1. Resource Depletion

Certain resource-dependent regions in Sichuan Province are facing economic downturns and industrial contraction due to sharply declining resource reserves. Taking Huaying City as an example, the city was included in the second batch of resource-depleted cities designated by the state due to the depletion of its coal resources; Similarly, Luzhou City has also been designated as one of the third batch of resource-depleted cities nationwide, based on the reality that its natural gas resources are nearing depletion [2]. Resource depletion has led to slower economic growth, fewer job opportunities, and increased social problems in these cities.

2.2. Pressure of Industrial Transformation

Resource-based cities in Sichuan Province face transformation pressures stemming from resource dependency. Currently, the economic scale and quality of enterprises above designated size in the county struggle to achieve effective balance with the shale gas industry, while the supporting role of other industries remains insufficiently pronounced [3]. This indicates that resource-based cities need to promote industrial upgrading and transformation to reduce their dependence on a single resource.

2.3. Environmental Degradation

Resource-based cities in Sichuan Province face challenges in ecological and environmental protection during their development. Although ecological conditions in these cities have improved in recent years, insufficient investment in technological innovation and demonstration applications within the green agriculture sector, coupled with an incomplete reserve system for environmentally friendly agricultural technologies, has hindered the coordinated achievement of food security and sustainable agricultural development goals [4].

2.4. Rural Hollowing-out

The persistent outflow of rural populations in Sichuan Province has led to the hollowing-out of villages, thereby exerting significant pressure on rural governance structures. By the end of 2022, Sichuan's rural population stood at 55.4386 million based on registered residence statistics, while the resident population totaled 34.878 million. Approximately 20.56 million rural residents had left their registered hometowns, accounting for 37.1% of the rural registered population. This population outflow has directly weakened the core forces of rural self-governance, thereby affecting the management and oversight of public affairs as well as the implementation of democratic decision-making in rural areas.

2.5. Infrastructure Deficiencies

Resource-based cities in Sichuan Province face deficiencies in infrastructure development, particularly in rural areas. Imbalances persist in the allocation of resources between urban and rural areas, with basic public service systems yet to be fully integrated. The distribution of essential public resources such as education, healthcare, and cultural services remains uneven across urban and rural regions. This situation constrains rural development, adversely affecting farmers' quality of life and the overall advancement of rural communities.

3. PATHWAYS FOR RURAL REVITALIZATION IN RESOURCE-BASED CITIES OF SICHUAN PROVINCE

Comrade Xi Jinping has emphasized: “Implementing the rural revitalization strategy is a major undertaking that requires comprehensive planning and scientific advancement.” In advancing the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas, five key areas should be prioritized: industrial revitalization, talent revitalization, cultural revitalization, ecological revitalization, and organizational revitalization [5]. Supported by the “Five Major Revitalizations,” the rural revitalization strategy has achieved comprehensive optimization and enhancement across multiple domains, including industrial systems, talent support, spiritual substance, and ecological environments. This has established a new framework characterized by internal and external coordination and the integration of focal points with broader coverage. “The Rural Revitalization Strategy Plan”

(2018–2022) explicitly states that, in accordance with the overarching requirements of “thriving industries, a pleasant living environment, a civilized rural culture, effective governance, and a prosperous life,” efforts should be made to scientifically and orderly advance the revitalization of rural industries, talent, culture, ecology, and organizations [6].

Xi Jinping also emphasized the need to advance the rural revitalization strategy in an orderly manner, with planning taking precedence, targeted measures implemented, and progress made through differentiated approaches. This requires scientifically addressing regional differences and characteristics, emphasizing local distinctiveness, and reflecting the unique charm of the countryside 错误!未找到引用源。 . This provides clearer guidance for implementing the comprehensive rural revitalization strategy. Resource-based cities in Sichuan Province exhibit distinct regional characteristics, with significant variations among their respective villages. Therefore, this chapter will conduct targeted path selection research within the framework of the “Five Revitalizations” approach, tailored to the specific conditions of rural areas in Sichuan's resource-based cities.

3.1. The Connotation and Internal Connections of the Rural Revitalization Strategy Pathway

The Rural Revitalization Strategy encompasses the revitalization of industries, talent, culture, ecology, and organizations. Among these, industrial revitalization is the focal point, talent revitalization provides the foundation, cultural revitalization serves as the soul, ecological revitalization forms the basis, and organizational revitalization ensures the safeguards. The “five revitalizations” within the Rural Revitalization Strategy constitute an interconnected organic system. This systemic framework not only comprehensively presents the overarching objectives of rural revitalization but also strategically aligns with the “Five-in-One” overall layout of socialist modernization. It holds profound significance for addressing the challenges related to agriculture, rural areas, and farmers [8].

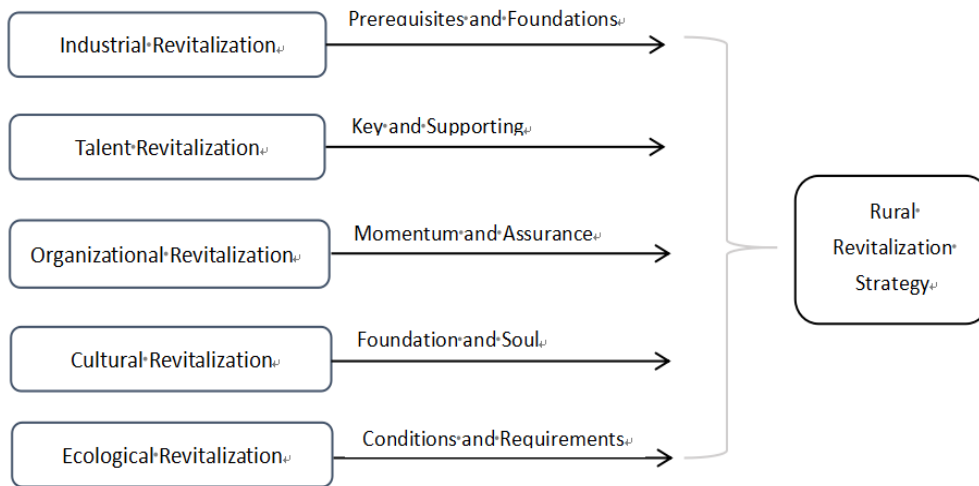


Figure 1. The Five-Pronged Approach to Rural Revitalization

Five key measures for rural revitalization. Industrial revitalization not only provides employment opportunities and development space for talent revitalization, attracting and cultivating new-type farmers and specialized professionals with expertise in technology, markets, and management, but also lays the material foundation for cultural revitalization, promoting the development and preservation of rural culture. Meanwhile, industrial revitalization emphasizes green development, aligning with ecological revitalization goals. By fostering green industries, it reduces environmental pollution and achieves a win-win outcome for both economic growth and ecological conservation. Industrial revitalization also requires organizational revitalization to provide robust institutional support. Strengthening grassroots Party organizations and enhancing rural governance capabilities create a favorable environment for stable industrial development. Talent revitalization plays a pivotal role in cultural revitalization, providing human resources for cultural inheritance and innovation. In turn, cultural development nurtures talent. In terms of ecological revitalization, talent revitalization provides essential technical and managerial support, driving the ecological and green transformation of agricultural production methods. Cultural revitalization enhances public environmental awareness and promotes ecological civilization practices, while a sound ecological environment also serves as the foundation for cultural diversity. Organizational revitalization ensures the effective implementation of ecological protection policies by strengthening grassroots Party organizations and rural governance, while also fostering the healthy development of rural culture, protecting cultural heritage, and elevating the level of rural civilization.

3.2. Practical Pathways for Rural Revitalization in Resource-Based Cities of Sichuan Province

3.2.1. Pathways for Rural Industrial Revitalization in Resource-Based Cities of Sichuan Province

Agriculture constitutes the core industrial form of the rural economy. Based on an analysis of universal pathways for industrial revitalization, this study focuses on four key areas: optimizing the agricultural industrial structure, promoting cross-sectoral integration and development, industrializing the utilization of distinctive rural resources, and extending agricultural industrial chains while enhancing value. It delves into the implementation pathways for industrial revitalization [9].

(1) Optimizing the agricultural industrial structure. Resource-based cities leverage their geographical and climatic advantages to optimize agricultural structures, develop specialty agricultural products, and enhance added value. While advancing agricultural modernization, they strengthen scientific and technological support while prioritizing ecological conservation, implementing ecological restoration projects, and vigorously promoting “digital village” development. Reducing fertilizer and pesticide

application rates, promoting green production models, implementing measures to partially replace chemical fertilizers with organic alternatives, strengthening monitoring and regulation of pesticide use, and preventing the misuse of high-pollution, high-residue pesticides—all these efforts aim to achieve dual improvements in ecological and economic benefits [10].

(2) Promote cross-sectoral industrial integration. Drive the convergence of primary, secondary, and tertiary industries, extend agricultural value chains, and develop new business models such as agricultural product processing, cold-chain logistics, rural tourism, and rural e-commerce to enhance added value [11]. Improve the planning and allocation of infrastructure, enhance the operational efficiency of transportation and logistics systems, accelerate the development of digital villages, and elevate the application level of informatization. Innovate institutional mechanisms, deepen land system reforms, optimize financial service systems, lay a solid foundation for industrial integration, and promote the coordinated advancement of multiple industries [12].

(3) Improve the planning and allocation of infrastructure, enhance the operational efficiency of transportation and logistics systems, accelerate the development of digital villages, and elevate the application level of informatization. Innovate institutional mechanisms, deepen land system reforms, optimize financial service systems, lay a solid foundation for industrial integration, and promote the coordinated advancement of multiple industries.

(4) Extending the Agricultural Industry Chain and Enhancing Value. Extend the agricultural industry chain by developing agricultural product processing and cold-chain logistics, supporting new types of business entities in processing and sales, and enhancing their capacity to connect with and benefit farmers. Foster the development of new agricultural business systems, promote the transformation of smallholder farmers into modern family farms, improve the standardized development of farmer cooperatives, and boost economies of scale in agricultural operations. Strengthen agricultural science and technology services, establish demonstration parks, promote the commercialization of scientific achievements, develop ecological agriculture, promote green production practices, enhance the quality of agricultural products, and achieve coordinated development between industry and ecology.

3.2.2. Pathways for Rural Talent Revitalization in Resource-Based Cities of Sichuan Province

Sichuan Province should promote the concentration of talent and intellectual resources in industrial development, rural construction, and grassroots governance. It should thoroughly implement the “Five-Year Action Plan for Rural Talent Revitalization in Sichuan Province” carrying out five major initiatives: talent recruitment, targeted training, on-the-job training, talent assistance, and talent incentives [13]. Additionally, efforts will be made to strengthen the development of practical talent in rural areas, cultivating a cohort of new professional farmers and rural practical talents to provide a talent foundation for rural revitalization.

Talent revitalization is the core element of rural revitalization. Based on the realities of rural areas in resource-based cities within Sichuan Province and the characteristics of their talent pool, combined with an analysis of universal pathways for talent revitalization, this study delves into implementation strategies from three dimensions: activating the potential of local talent, curbing the outflow of rural human capital, and establishing incentive mechanisms for talent return.

(1) Unlock the potential of local talent. By establishing a local talent database, we will identify and cultivate indigenous talent, enhance their capabilities, and provide robust support for rural revitalization. We will build talent development platforms, including agricultural science and technology demonstration parks and rural entrepreneurship and innovation zones, attracting research institutes and agribusinesses to offer technical support and practical opportunities. Incentive mechanisms will be established to promote talent exchange and collaboration, fostering a favorable talent ecosystem that energizes local talent.

(2) Curb the outflow of human capital from rural areas. Improve rural infrastructure and public services, narrow the urban-rural gap, enhance education and healthcare standards, and attract talent to return to rural communities [14]. Optimize the talent development environment, provide entrepreneurial support, establish special funds, and support rural leaders in wealth creation. Establish a scientific personnel mechanism, implement the separation of positions and staffing quotas, guide urban talent to work in rural areas, improve the system for serving rural communities, and advance rural revitalization.

(3) Establish an incentive mechanism to attract talent back to rural areas. Implement targeted recruitment strategies aligned with rural needs to attract agricultural science and technology professionals as well as management talent, including programs like the “Three Supports and One Assistance” initiative. Create innovation and entrepreneurship platforms, develop rural e-commerce and agricultural technology parks, and implement high-quality farmer training programs to promote new varieties and technologies. Leverage the appeal of hometown connections by mobilizing expatriate villagers to return as advisors, establish a “green channel” for rural governance talent, drive the return of capital and resources, and support rural revitalization.

3.2.3. Pathways for Rural Organizational Revitalization in Resource-Based Cities of Sichuan Province

Organizational revitalization serves as a robust guarantee for comprehensively advancing rural revitalization. Based on the realities of rural areas in resource-based cities within Sichuan Province and their organizational development characteristics, combined with an analysis of universal pathways for organizational revitalization, this study delves into implementation strategies from three dimensions: consolidating the core leadership role of grassroots Party organizations, improving the multi-stakeholder collaborative governance system in rural areas, and enhancing the governance effectiveness of grassroots organizations.

(1) Consolidate the core leadership role of grassroots Party organizations. Establish a responsibility system for grassroots Party building, strengthen the leading role of rural grassroots Party organizations, systematically coordinate the organic integration of Party building with agricultural and rural work, and improve the responsibility implementation mechanism featuring county-township linkage and township-led village development. Optimize the setup and operational mechanisms of Party organizations, refine the village Party organization system, implement a cross-appointment mechanism for village Party branch and village committee members, and ensure funding for the operation of village-level organizations [15]. Recruit talent from wealth-generating experts, returning college graduates, and veterans. Strengthen grassroots Party organization teams through training and incentive mechanisms, cultivating industry development leaders and local experts.

(2) Improve the multi-stakeholder collaborative governance system in rural areas. Refine rural governance mechanisms, optimize deliberation, decision-making, and oversight processes under the leadership of Party organizations, fully leverage the functions of self-governance bodies, and promote comprehensive coverage of village regulations and conventions. Accelerate the digital transformation of rural governance. Leverage platforms like “Chuan Shanzhi” to enhance governance informatization, optimize public service delivery, and implement a system where grassroots cadres provide full-process agency services for residents. Strengthen legal safeguards for rural governance by refining the rule-of-law operational framework, elevating villagers' legal literacy, implementing the “four discussions, two disclosures, and one oversight” system, and exploring new models for village-level public welfare projects.

(3) Enhance the governance effectiveness of grassroots organizations. Strengthen the cultivation of grassroots cadres' governance capabilities through professional training and practical experience to elevate their expertise in industrial revitalization, ecological conservation, and public services. Advance the optimization project for village Party organization leaders. Rationally allocate resources to grassroots organizations by ensuring operational funding for village-level organizations through

fiscal support and project prioritization to improve service efficiency. Establish a scientific assessment system that incorporates rural revitalization outcomes into performance evaluations. Implement targeted rectification measures under the “one village, one strategy” approach for weak and disorganized village Party organizations.

3.2.4. Pathways for Rural Cultural Revitalization in Resource-Based Cities of Sichuan Province

Cultural revitalization serves as a vital source of endogenous momentum for rural development. Building upon the aforementioned analysis of universal pathways for cultural revitalization, this section delves into implementation strategies across four dimensions: the creative transformation and innovative development of rural cultural resources; the construction of a rural spiritual civilization value system; the refinement of public cultural service delivery mechanisms; and the integrated development of cultural industries.

(1) Creative Transformation and Innovative Development of Rural Cultural Resources. Uncover and preserve traditional rural culture, establish cultural archives, restore ancient buildings, protect traditional villages, and advance concentrated, contiguous conservation and utilization. Promote cultural inheritance and innovation through cultural education activities, leveraging digital technology and new media platforms to advance the digital preservation and dissemination of rural culture. Strengthen social participation by establishing rural cultural cooperatives, organizing volunteer activities, and hosting cultural heritage competitions to stimulate public engagement.

(2) Building a Rural Spiritual Civilization Value System. Preserve and promote outstanding local ethical traditions by organizing “Civilized Family” initiatives and “Moral Role Model” selections to foster positive social norms and creatively transform traditional virtues. Advance social reform through public education and village regulations to address harmful practices like exorbitant dowries and extravagant waste. Strengthen rural cultural education by offering traditional culture courses, hosting cultural lectures, and providing arts training to elevate villagers' cultural literacy.

(3) The public cultural service delivery mechanism has been enhanced. Rural public cultural facilities have been upgraded, with cultural centers, libraries, and digital museums established. The “Hundreds, Thousands, and Tens of Thousands” initiative has been advanced to cultivate model villages for rural cultural revitalization. The variety and frequency of rural cultural activities have been expanded through cultural festivals, folk performances, and reading events. The digitalization of public cultural services has been accelerated by building a digital heritage resource platform to promote the digital preservation and dissemination of cultural resources.

(4) Integrated Development of Cultural Industries. Promote the coordinated development of rural cultural and creative industries with tourism, fostering new industry formats such as rural tourism sightseeing, leisure and experiential agriculture, and immersive local cultural experiences. Organize traditional festivals and develop distinctive cultural products. Cultivate rural cultural and creative industries by encouraging cultural enterprises to participate in development and supporting artisans in preserving and advancing traditional crafts. Strengthen policy support through dedicated funds and tax incentives to drive the intensive development of rural cultural industries.

3.2.5. Pathways for Ecological Revitalization in Rural Areas of Resource-Based Cities in Sichuan Province

Ecological revitalization serves as the foundational requirement for comprehensively advancing rural revitalization. Based on the realities of rural areas in resource-based cities within Sichuan Province and their ecological characteristics, combined with an analysis of universal pathways for ecological revitalization, this study delves into implementation strategies across four dimensions: promoting green and low-carbon transformation of rural industries, cultivating values of ecological civilization, improving village-level integrated environmental governance systems, and optimizing planning and management of rural ecological spaces.

(1) Promote the green and low-carbon transformation of rural industries. Advance green agricultural development, accelerate the transformation of resource-based cities in Sichuan Province, promote ecological agriculture models, reduce the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and develop organic agriculture and ecological circular agriculture [16]. Develop eco-tourism and “eco-plus” industries by leveraging natural ecological resources to promote rural tourism, forest wellness, and other initiatives that convert ecological value into tangible benefits. Strengthen policy support, establish dedicated funds, advance the construction of the “Tianfu Forest Four Reservoirs,” and foster the growth of ecological industries.

(2) Cultivate ecological civilization values. Strengthen ecological culture advocacy by leveraging key events to raise villagers' awareness of environmental protection. Promote eco-friendly lifestyles through initiatives like waste sorting and green commuting, while establishing ecological culture corridors and themed parks to foster low-carbon villages. Conduct ecological education programs by introducing environmental courses in rural schools, organizing lectures and skills training to enhance villagers' capacity for ecological participation.

(3) Improve the village-level environmental management system. Advance comprehensive rural environmental improvements by systematically implementing household waste disposal, integrated sewage treatment, and sanitation facility upgrades, achieving the phased objectives for domestic sewage treatment under the Thousand Villages Demonstration Project. Strengthen ecosystem protection and restoration through coordinated efforts in integrated management of mountains, waters, forests, farmlands, lakes, grasslands, and desert areas, while continuing afforestation initiatives and wetland ecological restoration. Establish a long-term ecological conservation and management system to ensure sustainable environmental governance outcomes.

(4) Optimize the planning and management of rural ecological spaces. Scientifically formulate ecological plans, integrate the ecological characteristics of resource-based cities and rural areas, clearly define ecological protection red lines, rationally allocate ecological industries, and promote the coordinated development of ecology with the economy and society. Advance the conversion of ecological resource value, achieving the quantification and marketization of ecological products. Strengthen digital management of ecological governance, build information platforms, realize the digitization of ecological environment monitoring, governance, and management, and enhance the scientific rigor and precision of governance.

4. CONCLUSION

After conducting an in-depth analysis of the current development status and challenges faced by resource-based cities in Sichuan Province, as well as examining successful domestic and international experiences in rural revitalization, we arrive at the following conclusions and propose corresponding pathways:

Regarding talent revitalization, Sichuan Province should optimize mechanisms for directing talent resources toward rural areas and effectively implement the Implementation Plan for the Five-Year Action to Revitalize Rural Talent and Industries in Sichuan Province. Resource-dependent regions in Sichuan Province urgently need to establish and improve a modern agricultural industrial framework. This will promote the systematic integration of agricultural production with processing, manufacturing, and services, fostering the development of emerging rural industries and innovative business models. Such efforts will enhance industrial quality and efficiency while ensuring sustained growth in farmers' incomes.

Prioritize cultivating specialized new agricultural operators and versatile rural professionals to provide robust human capital support for the rural revitalization strategy. Regarding organizational revitalization, Sichuan Province should strengthen the political and organizational functions of rural grassroots Party organizations, comprehensively enhance the leadership, cohesion, implementation

capacity, and service efficiency of the rural governance system, and ensure the effective implementation of all rural revitalization policies and measures. Regarding cultural revitalization, Sichuan should enrich rural public cultural services, strengthen the protection, inheritance, and innovative development of traditional agricultural civilization, cultivate culturally creative industries with regional characteristics, and continuously enhance the cultural influence of rural areas. For ecological revitalization, Sichuan must accelerate the construction of a rural green development system, adhere to an agricultural development path prioritizing ecology, guided by quality, and driven by branding, comprehensively improve the quality, efficiency, and market competitiveness of agricultural products, and simultaneously deepen the comprehensive improvement of the rural living environment.

The path selection for rural revitalization in resource-based cities of Sichuan Province should focus on multiple dimensions including industrial upgrading, ecological conservation, talent cultivation, cultural heritage preservation, infrastructure development, policy support, and community governance. This will establish a comprehensive, multi-tiered, and broad-based strategic framework for rural revitalization. By implementing these pathways, resource-based cities in Sichuan will effectively advance rural revitalization and achieve modernization of agriculture and rural areas. This requires concerted efforts from governments, enterprises, and all sectors of society to ensure sustainable development and long-term prosperity in Sichuan's rural regions.

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