

MOVING THE CENTER: THE RELATIONSHIP OF URBAN PLANNING, ARCHITECTURE AND CIVIL ENGINEERING PROJECTS WITH THEIR BENEFICIARY

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ABSTRACT

Terms such as quality deviations, non-conformances, defects, quality failures, over budget and behind schedule are quite frequent in urban planning, architecture and civil engineering projects. The effort to analyze the parameters affecting quality, budget, schedule and functionality failure and/or diversion in construction industry is extensive. Nevertheless, the number of construction projects that have functional deficiencies minimally in one of their complementary elements is significant. The main reasons behind these deficiencies are considered to be the lack of experience, ineffective interaction of clients-consultants-contractors and corruption. This article attempts to shed light to another reason why construction projects fail to fulfill some of their main functional parameters, emphasizing that this is caused by an inconsiderate approach of the ones in charge of planning and building structures to their beneficiaries. In other words, urban planners, architects and civil engineers approach the structure in hand as “the center of the world”. This is somehow reflected in the structure which tends to demonstrate an Othering attitude, similar to that of the (former) colonizer to the (formerly) colonized, to their surroundings and beneficiaries.

KEYWORDS: Marginalization, construction projects, project failure

INTRODUCTION

Annual construction market reaches approximately US\$ 3.400,00 billion (Sohail et al., 2008) and every construction projects affects directly or indirectly the life of the surroundings (Younger et al., 2008). Terms such as quality deviations, non-conformances, defects, quality failures (Love et al., 2002), ‘over budget’ and behind schedule (Larson, E. 1995) are quite frequent in urban planning, architecture and civil engineering projects. The effort to analyze the parameters affecting quality, (Jha et al., 2006) budget, (Rahman et al., 2013) (Arditi et al., 1985) schedule, (Larsen et al., 2016) and functionality failure and/or diversion in construction industry is extensive. Nevertheless, the number of construction projects that have functional deficiencies minimally in one of their complementary elements is significant. Luxury apartments without pedestrian paths, neighborhood roads without lighting systems, highways without drainage system, and theaters with poor acoustic systems are not infrequent. The main reasons behind these deficiencies are considered to be the lack of experience, ineffective interaction of clients-consultants-contractors and corruption. An extensive research is done in analyzing causes of delay and overruns in construction projects, Assaf et al. (2006) investigated the causes of delay in 76 large construction projects and concluded that 70% of projects experienced time overrun. Their research indicates that

owners and consultants specify contractor as an important sources of delay, while, contractors indicate that the important sources of delay are owners and consultants. **Gonzales et al. (2014)** analyzed the causes of delay and time performance in construction projects and found out that planning was the most harmful delay cause on time performance. **Mohamid et al. (2012)** examined the causes of delay in 52 road construction projects and concluded that the top five severe delay causes are political situation, limited movement between areas, award project to lowest bid price, progress payment delay by the owner, and the shortage of equipment. On the other hand, **Aziz et al. (2016)** explored delay causes of road construction projects in Egypt. As the main causes of this the study mentioned the owner's financial problems, shortage in equipment and inadequate contractor experience. **Sambasivan et al. (2007)** identified the 10 (ten) most primary causes of delay in the Malaysian construction industry; they are all related to the contractor's improper planning/poor management, client's inadequate financial situation and stemming payments issues as well as the lack of interaction among involved parties. **Arditi et al. (1985)** studied the cost of overruns in public projects and indicated that the most important factors are errors in first estimates, increase in material prices, inflationary pressure and workman's wages. **Arditi et al. (2017)** explored the relationship between a construction company's organizational culture and delay and determined that a company's organizational culture is one of the delay causes in construction projects. **Niazi et al. (2017)** found that construction cost overruns in Afghanistan are primarily the result of corruption, delayed progress payments by the owner, difficulties encountered by contractors in financing project, security, changes made in the order by the owner during construction as well as market inflation. **Senouci et al. (2016)** stated that cost overruns and delays in energy megaprojects are mainly due to mistakes in decision-making based on the conceptual project, environmental and social costs not allocated correctly, contract management, financial risks and corruption. **Polat et al. (2014)** stated also that factors affecting cost overruns in micro-scaled construction companies are principally related to client and contractor performance. The number of scholars that have analyzed the delays and overruns in construction projects is significant, including **Caliba et al. (2009)**, **Frimpong et al. (2003)**, **Odeh et al. (2002)**. Corruption is a common challenge to construction industries in both developed and developing countries (**Le et al., 2014**). Indeed, **Tabish et al. (2014)** states that corruption may occur in any phase of a project; namely, project initiation, planning and design, bidding and construction. **Sohail et al. (2008)** estimated that the annual loss from corruption in the global construction market reaches approximately US\$340 billion, which accounts for 10% of the global construction market value. **Owusu et al. (2019)** evaluated the construction projects' vulnerability to corruption in developing countries. An extensive research has been conducted to shed light of corruption in construction project **Locatelli et al. (2017)**, **Nordin et al. (2013)**, **Neu et al. (2015)**. On the other hand, **Ahzahar et al. (2011)** maintains that the low quality of construction material is one of the most common factors that lead to building defects and failures. Although there is a considerable number of independently undertaken researches that analyze a multitude of potential factors leading to defects, delays, over budget, as well as the failure of construction projects to serve their surroundings and even their purpose, these issues seem to be constantly encountered.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

All construction projects begin with an idea, resulting from a perception of a need and in the process of their provision aim to make a profit (Warren D.R. 1996). The development phases

of construction projects are usually grouped into two main stages: Pre-Construction Stage and Construction Stage

Pre-Construction Stage

Whenever a need is identified to develop urban planning, architecture or civil engineering project the Client (either Private or Public) employs an Engineer to consult/advise. This period, before work begin on site, is known as pre-construction phase. As the Client presents to Engineer the identified need for the project or/and with a possible project idea the Engineer develops the team/structure to fulfill the project requirement and investigate the fusibility of the project. Commonly the team is composed of 4 major subdivisions Technical Department, Legal department, Economic Department, Environmental and Statutory. Each department investigates the project in terms of duration, cost, technological challenges, environmental impact, affect in the surroundings and other people. Engineer may have these departments within his company profile, may employ them from market or recommends to the Client and it directly employs them. All the above-mentioned relations are possible/practiced and the connection between parties is shown in Figure 1.

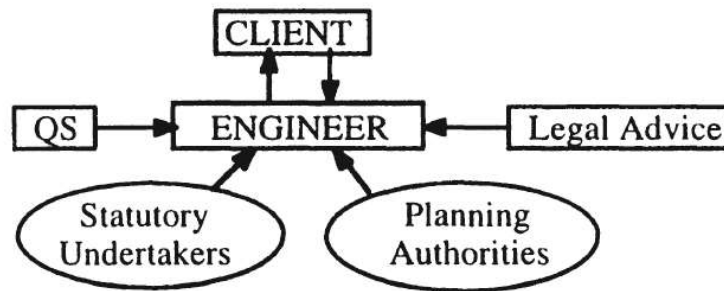


Figure 1. Pre-Construction Stage (Warren D.R. 1996)

Construction Stage

Whenever the Engineer argues that the project idea is feasible and/or fulfils the requirements for the initial identified need the construction stage begins. In the standard contracts there are three or four main parties involved, Client, Engineer and Contractor as composure parties and Dispute Adjudication/Avoidance Boards (DAAB) Members as elective/request party. The Contractor is responsible to constructs the works in compliance with awarded contract including but not limited to quality, quantity, time, budget and reports regularly to Engineer project progress and/or faced challenges. The Engineer is responsible to check and prevent any possible deviation from the awarded contract including but not limited to health and safety, quality, quantity, time, budget and reports regularly to Client project progress and/or faced challenges. the engineer is responsible to control/check and certify documents of construction stage. The client is responsible for the financial payments of the certified document like interim payment certificate, material supply, taxes and so on. The DAAB members is responsible to solve dispute adjudication/avoidance between parties. The relation between parties in the construction stage is shown in Figure 2.

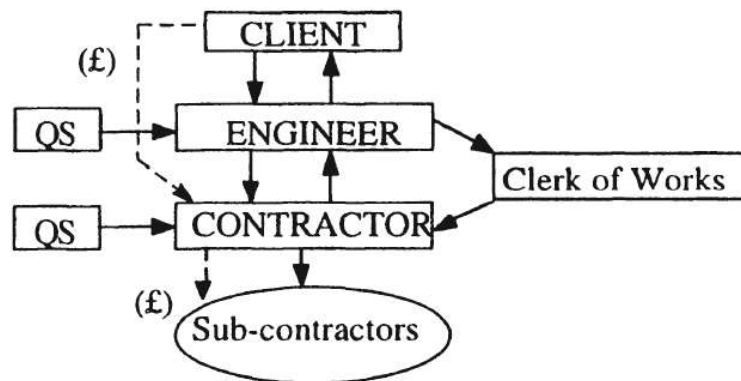


Figure 2. Construction Stage (Warren D.R. 1996)

why do construction projects fail?

There are at least three different entities involved in the development of a construction project, as shown in part 2 of this article: Client, Engineer and Contractor. The Client initiates the project and is responsible for providing funds for its execution; at times, it is referred to as the Employer. The Engineer is appointed by the Client, and, in a conventional contract, s/he is the Client's representative; at times, it is referred to as the Supervision. The Contractor is the one with whom the contract for the project is signed, mostly after a selection process (bidding process) organized for the construction of the works. Although at least three qualified entities are engaged in pre-construction and construction stage of project they still fail either on the project its-self or just “a step” away. In the introduction chapter a wide literature review was performed and it is noticeable that all of their findings are related to the inability of at least one of these entities to perform their contractual responsibility. The Client may fail to find experienced Contractor/Engineer or bid the contract at lower prices or even be corrupted. The Engineer may fail to enable effective interaction with clients and contractors or may not have the relevant experience. The Contractor may fail because of a large number of factors, or it may have bad intentions, such as the maximization of profits without performing its contractual obligations. It is obvious that if any of the involved entities fails to perform its duties the projects fails, but the questions still stands: “Why do construction projects still fail,” even when the evolved entities perform well and timely? “Why do construction projects still fail,” even when the Client is a private entity and the Contractor is a subdivision of its own? This article attempts to shed light on another reason why construction projects fail to fulfill some of their main functional parameters, emphasizing that this is caused by an inconsiderate approach of the ones in charge of planning and building structures to their beneficiaries. In other words, urban planners, architects and civil engineers approach the structure in hand as “the center of the world”. Even when a construction projects succeed to fulfill its goals, it considerable percentage fails a “step” away; even when they succeed on their own, within their concrete and conceptual boundaries, they fail to be integrated as a functional segment of the surrounding or vice versa the surrounding fail to be an integral part of those successful projects.

‘Othering’ as a philosophical concept

The concept of the ‘Other’ is not a new one. It has been being used increasingly in philosophy and social studies for more than five decades to refer to the condition of individuals, groups, communities and sections within one that are directly and/or indirectly not accepted as equal

to 'the Self' and 'its similars', that are considered inferior and, consequently, pushed to the margins of society (Bullock et al., 1999). The Hegelian Self - Other dichotomy, in which the Other is solely a complementary element that serves to identify the Self (Hegel et al., 1977), was utilized by Simone de Beauvoir in her groundbreaking work "The Second Sex" to shed light on the man - woman relationship and to reflect a woman's position in a patriarchal society. In the very introduction of her famous book, de Beauvoir claims: "She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute - she is the Other." (De Beauvoir, S. 1949). Maintaining that the concept is not one meant to elucidate the man - woman relationship, de Beauvoir contends: "Thus, it is that no group ever sets itself up as the One without at once setting up the Other over against itself. If three travellers chance to occupy the same compartment, that is enough to make vaguely hostile 'Others' out of all the rest of the passengers on the train. In small-town eyes all persons not belonging to the village are 'strangers' and suspect; to the native of a country all who inhabit other countries are 'foreigners'; Jews are 'different' for the anti-Semite, Negroes are 'inferior' for American racists, aborigines are 'natives' for colonists, proletarians are the 'lower class' for the privileged." (De Beauvoir, S. 1949). As suggested by de Beauvoir, the concept of 'Self - Other' has been widely relied upon by the non-homogeneous category labeled as postcolonial. Postcolonial theorists Mishra and Hodge claim: "Postcolonialism [...] is not a homogenous category, either across all post-colonial societies or even within a single one. Rather, it refers to a typical configuration which is always in the process of change, never consistent with itself." (Vijay et al., 1994). However, the multitude of postcolonial activists and researches that have attempted to shed light on the colonial and postcolonial experience of various communities along those who have enriched and made use of the 'postcolonial' as a mode to also elucidate the experiences of emigrants, diasporas, as well as multi-cultural coexistence in our contemporary global village of concrete economic and invented cultural stratification, have extensively relied upon this concept. As the Indian scholar Gayatri Ch. Spivak emphasizes, "[w]e live in a postcolonial neo-colonized world." (Spivak G. CH., 1993), especially now. Additionally, the dichotomy has served not only to shed light on the relationship of the (former) colonizer with the (formerly) colonized but also to clarify the socio-cultural position and the identity issues faced by both sides, during colonization and after. The Algerian pioneer of anti-colonial struggle and resistance, Franz Fanon made use of the "Self - Other" dichotomy to express the dehumanizing and existence-negating approach of the white colonizer towards the black colonized, "[t]he anti-Black world, the only world we know, hides this non-being to the extent that it ascribes a place and role to abject blackness." (Fanon F. 2008). Similarly, 'the father of Orientalism' Edward Said, in his most famous work, shifted the concept to refer to a whole geography and religious belief of non - belongs. Said's "Other" is the Oriental subject, just like the Orient that has been created and perpetuated through the Western discourse (Said E. 1979). "Ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied. To believe that Orient was created _or, as I call it, 'Orientalized ' and to believe that such things happen simply as a necessity of the imagination is to be disingenuous.... The Orient was Orientalized not only because it was discovered to be Oriental in all those ways considered commonplace by an average nineteenth century European, but also because it could be _that is submitted to being made Oriental.'" (Said E. 1979). As obvious, Said suggest that, like the natural female is socially and politically turned into the subordinate "woman", so the Oriental is turned into the rest of the

Western perception; it is need of inventing and defining ‘the Self’ as powerful as much as it is a way of holding this power. . However, as postcolonial scholar Homi K. Bhabha suggests that the interaction of diverse cultures, even if in a power relationship and hierarchal perception, lead to the creation of hybrid identities: the individual identity of those existing within ‘the third space’, which is the realm where diverse cultures encounter but also inevitably mingle. Bhabha contends: “For me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘Third Space’, which enables other positions to emerge.” (Johnathan R. 1990). At this point, it is crucial to emphasize that the global dimension of the postcolonial theory is not only due to the fact that this approach manages to shed light on the whole variety of colonial, postcolonial and neo-colonial experiences, but also to develop viable modes to contradict Othering and defy marginalization, the pushing to the edges of existence and the diverse Other. Kenyan scholar and writer Ngugi wa Thiong’o has baptized this process as “moving the center”. In his collection of essays with the same title, Ngugi maintains that marginalization among nations and within one community is the result of placing one perceived culture or identity in the center, as the placing of the West and its culture in the center has led to the marginalization of the so-called the rest (Ngugi wa Th. 1993). To Ngugi, the worldwide contribution to the formation of knowledge from various intellectuals of different perspectives will also contribute to the “moving of the center” and the achievement of pluralism for cultures. In other words, if the perception of any diverse culture as “Other” contributed to the creation on a world with its center in the West, by reinventing itself as a dominant power over its inferiorly invented “Other”, then the powerful response emphasizing oneself would move the center (Ngugi wa Th. 1993)

The Othering as a cause of construction projects failure

In the construction industry the reason why construction projects fail has been widely discussed and studied. Many topics have been addressed and analyzed in the literature, such as an unscheduled project, selection of the wrong contractor, lowest bidder, inability to obtain construction materials on time, inflation, corruption, inadequate client-engineer-contractor relationship, project changes along the way, and so on. All the above reasons stand, and if need there may be counted more but all these reasons converge at one point, which may be called as ‘Moving the Center’. All of these reasons rely on poor/small interests bypassing the overall importance the project has, and most importantly ignoring the big picture/everyday life interests of the beneficiaries. An effort is done to explain how ‘Moving the center’ from beneficiaries interest to some poor/small/individual interests causes cause major problems and often non-renewable ones by analyzing some big and well known projects in worldwide different disciplines of construction industry.

The construction of high Aswan Dam dam (Abu-Zeid et al., 1997) on the river Nile created the water reservoir which submerged remains of Nubian, Egyptian, Roman, and other civilizations from which Abu Simbel temple complex built by Ramses II in the 13th century BCE was the most significant one. Egyptian authorities, with the blessing of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), were involved in safeguarding the monuments by transferring the temples to higher elevations (Hill A.C. 2021) (Figure 1), action which is called postcolonial diplomacy by Hill A.C. (2021). Due to the reservoir impounding there were relocated somehow 25 000 houses among 33 villages. Number of archaeological sites in the Aswan dam reservoir are as follows surveyed (1753 – 100%), excavated (476 – 27.1%) and conserved (100 – 5.7%) (Marchetti et al., 2018). None of

the conventional methods of project failure like corruption, bad planning, improper construction techniques etc. is ever proved, although it is a fact that only 5.7% of archeological sites were conserved, which in its self is a big failure just because the dam is considered to be `the center` and all of its surroundings were/are considered as `others`.



Figure 1. Abu Simbel relocation (Wikiwand 2021)

The Ilisu dam is another significant example, a € 1.8 billion hydroelectric scheme on the Tigris, a project of Turkey's State water agency (DSI) (Ronayne, M. 2006) submerged thousands of archaeological, cultural and historical sites, including most of the town of Hasankeyf (Algaze, G. 1989) a 12000 years settlement (Boyle, P. 2019) which has hosted substantial number of civilizations some of which are known as the first human settlements in Mesopotamia gathering the Byzantine, Ottoman, Artukid, Eyyubid, Assyrian, Urartian and Arabic cultures (Figure 2). The impounding affected 184 villages with an estimated population of about 61 000 people (Morvaridi, B. 2004). Although this dams have brought economic benefits, it had a dramatic impact in terms of population displacement, heritage loss, environmental damage, and conflictuality as a result of the tensions arisen between ethnic groups of the lake area. Considering all these issues and the loss of Hasankeyf Ronayne 2006 (Ronayne, M. 2006). considered the construction of Ilisu dam to be a monument of barbarism.

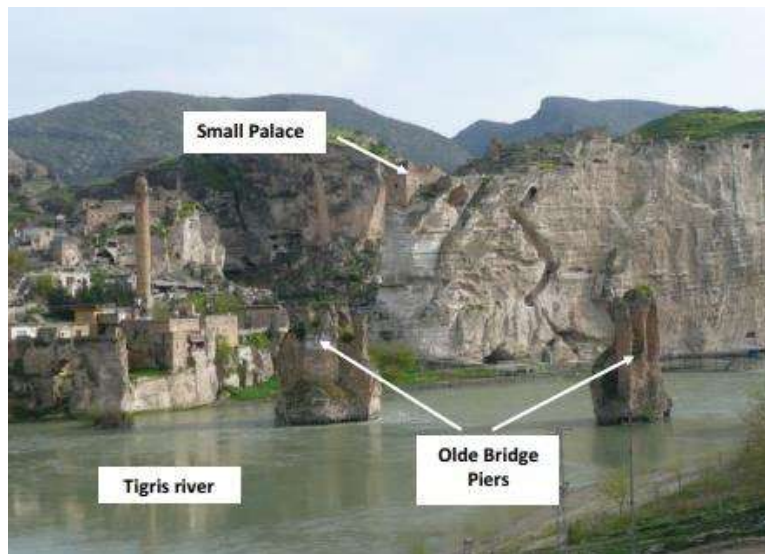


Figure 2. Hasankeyf before impounding (Topal et al., 2016)

When it comes to authoritarian/dictatorial regimes the results of these actions are even more painful. And here it is essential to bring an example from Albania of the `78. The whole city of Kukes was relocated for the construction of the Fierza hydropower plant without a single public hearing and with zero heritage conservation. But even in this case the main reasoning of failure is othering attitude.



Figure 3. Some road/street views in Albania

The M25 or London Orbital Motorway is a 117 miles long major road encircling most of Greater London. The traffic on M25 is well known, the worst motorway traffic jam was on 5 April 1985 it stretched for 40 miles. Chris Rea (Rea et al., 1989) while stuck in traffic for over an hour, got the idea for this song and wrote the lyrics of the `Road to Hell` in the vehicle at the intersection of the M25 It is believed that one of the sources of error in the M25 traffic forecasts was the underestimation of longer distance rerouting effects (Mackie et al., 1998) and no evident joined up planning between central and local government. Rapidly increased land values in the vicinity of motorway junctions made the last one insufficient for traffic flow/circulation. There are written songs, articles, TV shows about the traffic of M25 but there is no any evidence that it has happen as a result of corruption, improper implementation, use of low quality materials etc. The main reason why the road failed to transfer the load without major traffic jams is neglecting the surroundings in other words the road and the actual conditions of that time was the `center` and the possible developments of the near future was considered as `the other`.

When it comes to developing countries, the ones that have not achieved a significant degree of industrialization/economic growth the situation is even worst. In figure 3 there are shown some road/street views of Albania, where everything can be seen/possible. There is a missing traffic line because of an existing structure (the structure itself carries no any heritage value that cannot be expropriated), an electrical pole in the middle of the road, a sidewalk with width of only few centimeters, as it is not enough there are even lighting poles installed on them.

Citicorp Center building is a 59-story, tower well known for its unique urban form. The building is supported by four, nine-story columns located on the center points of the lot lines, rather than the corners that define the block that it occupies. Due to its unique structural form it is a well-known building of Manhattan both in engineering and architecture as well as scientific discussions (Morgenstern, J. 1997). The Citicorp Center construction is a result of the deal that the owners had to strike in order to purchase the air rights of the church, which still occupies one of the corners of the site, (Akın Ö. 2022) like shown in figure 4. Mian, N. A. (2008) in the paper "Prophets-for-Profits": Redevelopment and the Altering Urban Religious Landscape describes that from this development and even a church perspective, the situation is viewed as 'win-win', although the situation may be different if the structure carries historical values.



Figure 4. St. Peter's Church and Citicorp Center (The Berk shire edge 2021)

`Purchasing the air rights` of the church in this specific case, is many points of view a `win-win` relation. The church gained a new building and perhaps more members due to the larger number of people acting on the square/center, the city gained a an elegant building from architecture point of view and a building which lead the structural design to an upper level. Whereas the situation may be different when it comes to developing countries where check and balance principles may not function properly. In figure 5 there are shown two picture of Durres city, the left part shows a very small part of the wall, part of `Golden gate` the first gate of Via Egnatia, which linked Dyrrachium (Durres) to Byzantium/Constantinople. Via Egnatia was the first Roman highway to be built east of the Adriatic, (Lolos, Y. (2007) the right one shown an entire villa complex majority of which are under new building foundations, similar is the fate of enemurous number of Roman baths (Shkodra R.B 2021). A lot of discussions and opposition was done for the preservation of the old structures/heritage but all the attempts fail and they do not exist anymore. The developers of the new ones strongly defended that the new structure also served the old one, an attitude which was also welcomed by the local/central authorities, even they went so far as tried to show the protection of some small pieces as great success, this kind of behavior nothing but (Fanon

F. 2008) Franz Fanon Error! Bookmark not defined. “Self - Other” dichotomy making an existence-negating approach of the new building (white colonizer) towards the existing/old/heritage ones (black colonized).

Similar samples can be counted all around the world and in every discipline of construction industry like residential buildings, infrastructure projects, large dams, railways and so on.



Figure 5. (Ex) archeological ruins in Durres city

CONCLUSION

The intention of this work is to put on ground an hypothesis that all the reasons leading to construction project failure/partial failure converge at one point, which may be called as `Moving the Center`. All of these reasons rely on poor/small interests bypassing the overall importance the project has, and most importantly ignoring the big picture/everyday life interests of the beneficiaries. In other words, urban planners, architects and civil engineers, in most of cases even decision making authorities, approach the structure in hand as “the center of the world”. This is somehow reflected in the structure which tends to demonstrate an Othering attitude, similar to that of the (former) colonizer to the (formerly) colonized, to their surroundings and beneficiaries.

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