

PERCEPTIONS OF PEACE AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION: A STUDY OF HOST-COMMUNITIES AND REFUGEES IN NDUTA AND MTENDELI CAMPS, KIBONDO, TANZANIA.

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Abstract

This study investigates the perceptions of peace and social integration among host communities and refugees residing in Nduta and Mtendeli Camps in Kibondo District, Tanzania. This study elucidates the dynamics of relationships between these two groups against the backdrop of increasing global displacement. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combines qualitative inquiries through in-depth interviews with quantitative data collected via structured definition administered to 90 participants, including refugees and local community members. The study employs statistical methods to assess perceptions of safety, social cohesion, and economic integration. The results indicate significant disparities in how host communities and refugees perceive each other's interactions. While many host community members view refugees as potential threats to peace and security, they also simultaneously express feelings of safety in their presence. Refugees, in contrast, show a willingness to collaborate with host communities to foster peace. Both groups, however, exhibit a lack of understanding and empathy toward one another, hindering social and economic integration efforts. This research contributes to the limited literature on refugee-host community dynamics in Tanzania, highlighting the necessity of enhanced communication, trust-building measures, and targeted economic empowerment initiatives. By offering insights into the lived experiences of both refugees and host communities, the study underscores the complexity of integration processes and the need for comprehensive policies that address the concerns and contributions of both groups.

1. INTRODUCTION

Global displacement has reached unprecedented levels, with over 70.8 million individuals forcibly displaced due to conflicts, persecution, and socio-economic crisis by the end of 2018 (UNHCR, 2019). The majority of these individuals, comprising approximately 80% of the global refugee population, are hosted in neighboring countries,

often in regions already burdened by poverty and underdevelopment (Betts & Collier, 2017; UNHCR, 2019). Tanzania, a long-standing host for refugees since the early 1960s, illustrates the complexities of this humanitarian challenge. With a history of accommodating refugees from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and other neighboring nations, Tanzania's approach has shifted from a welcoming open-door policy under the leadership of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere to a more regulated environment following changes in refugee management protocols (Kamanga, 2005; Romtveit, 2019; Rutinwa, 2020).

The establishment of refugee camps, such as Nduta and Mtendeli, has led to significant transformations in the surrounding host communities. These camps not only provide shelter for refugees but also require local communities to adapt to an influx of people, impacting their livelihoods and social dynamics (Chambers, 1986; Ager & Strang, 2008). Despite the increase in refugees, the difficulties faced by these host communities often receive less attention than the experiences of refugees themselves (UNHCR, 2011; Al Akash et al., 2022). Consequently, it is vital to investigate the perceptions of peace and social integration among both refugees and host communities to understand the broader implications of refugee encampment in Tanzania.

Although some studies, such as those by the European Commission (2015) and the International Rescue Committee (2016), have examined the perceptions of refugees in host societies, empirical research focuses specifically on the Tanzanian contexts remains scarce. Current literature emphasizes cultural differences and economic disparities as significant challenges for social integration but often overlooks the nuanced interrelationships between refugees and local populations (Hassan & Bhatia, 2021). Moreover, theories, such as social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and human capital theory (Cheung & Phillimore, 2014) offer valuable frameworks for understanding these interactions.

This study aims to fill the existing knowledge gap by examining the socio-economic impacts and perceptions of peace among host communities and refugees in Nduta and Mtendeli Refugee Camps in Kibondo District, Kigoma Region. Through qualitative inquiry and community empowerment, the research seeks to uncover the lived experiences of both groups, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of social integration processes and fostering a dialogue on coexistence. As the humanitarian landscape evolves, the findings from this study will contribute critical insights into the dynamics of displacement and community resilience in Tanzania (Mastrorillo et al., 2021).

2. METHODOLOGY

Area of study

This study was conducted in Nduta and Mtendeli villages within the Kibondo District of the Kigoma Region in Tanzania. The establishment of these villages was influenced by the presence of well-established refugee camps—Nduta Camp and Mtendeli Camp. Kigoma Region has been significantly impacted by the influx of refugees from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, thus providing a relevant context for the study. These camps are central to the research focus due to their role in hosting a considerable number of displaced individuals, making Nduta and Mtendeli essential sites for examining the implications of refugee presence on local peace and social integration.

Research Design

A case study research design was employed for this investigation. This approach is particularly advantageous for exploring phenomena that are not understood (Kothari, 2001). The case study design enables an in-depth analysis of a contemporary issue within its real-life context by using multiple sources of evidence (Cooper & Schindler, 2009). Accordingly, this study integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions and experiences of both refugees and host communities.

Population of the Study and sample size

The population for this study is defined as the complete set of individuals, cases, or objects that share common observable characteristics (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). The target population consists of 362,922 individuals residing in Kibondo District. This population includes both refugees living in the Nduta and Mtendeli camps and local community members, facilitating a holistic examination of the study's focus. Non-probability sampling was used to select the sample for this study. While there are various techniques in this category, certain methods are necessary to reduce the cost of studying the entire population with the selected sample representing the whole population, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sampling Procedures and Sample Sizes

Respondents	Sample Size	Technique
Nduta Villagers	40	Convenient Sampling
Mtendile Villagers	40	Convenient Sampling
Local Government Officers	2	Purposive
Security Officers	2	Purposive
Representatives of Civil Society Organizations	2	Purposive
Refugees	4	Purposive
Total Respondents	90	

Data Collection Methods

Data collection in this study incorporated two primary methods: structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaires were designed to capture quantitative data using a Likert scale, allowing for the measurement of respondents' perceptions regarding local peace and security. In-depth interviews facilitated a qualitative exploration of the experiences and views of both refugees and local community members, enriching the overall data landscape.

Data Analysis

The data analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative techniques. For the quantitative data derived from the questionnaires, the means and standard deviations were have calculated to assess refugee presence effectively. According to Bonne and Bonne (2012), these statistical measures are appropriate for evaluating central tendency and variability in Likert-scale data, enabling the combination of items into a single composite score variable.

T-values were computed to ascertain the significance of the mean scores. The same analytical techniques were applied to evaluate local peace and security within Nduta and Mtendeli Camps.

To interpret mean scores, the following values and interpretations were used.

Mean Range	Description	Interpretation
3.26-4.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
2.51-3.25	Agree	High
1.76-2.50	Disagree	Low
1.00-1.75	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

For qualitative data gathered from interviews, narrative analysis was employed to interpret findings and validate quantitative data obtained from questionnaires. This method offers a richer understanding of the lived experiences expressed by participants, thereby providing a more nuanced view of the complex interactions between refugees and host communities.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Quantitative findings on the perceptions of both host communities and refugees:

The data in Table 2 offer insights into how both host communities and refugees view their relationship and the effects of refugees on the host community. The findings indicate significant differences in perception between the two groups.

Table 2: Perceptions of both Host Communities and Refugees (N=90)

Item	Mean	Std.deviation	t-value	interpretation
Refugees threaten peace and security in host communities	3.33	0.65	5.12***	Very High
The host community is safe with refugees living in the area	3.06	0.45	6.80***	High
Refugees have contributed to increased tensions between the host community and the refugees.	2.87	0.68	4.22***	High
The host community and refugees share a common understanding of peace and security.	2.81	0.70	4.01***	High
Refugees are willing to work together with the host community to maintain peace and security.	2.79	0.63	4.42***	High
The host community perceives refugees as a source of conflict and violence.	2.77	0.61	4.54***	High
Refugees have a positive attitude toward the host community and its values.	2.66	0.74	3.59***	High
The host community and refugees share a sense of responsibility for maintaining peace and security.	2.53	0.78	3.24***	High

***Significant at 0.01

The mean score of 3.33 (very high) for the statistic "Refugees are a threat to peace and security in the host community" indicates that a substantial majority of host communities view refugees as a potential threat to their peace and security. This perception is reinforced by a high t-value of 5.12 and a significant p-value of 0.01, suggesting a strong correlation between the perception of refugees as a threat and the likelihood of conflict between host communities and refugees (Kline, 2013).

Conversely, the mean score of 3.06 (high) for the statement "The host community feels safe with refugees living in the area" reveals that, although there are still safety and security concerns, most host communities feel secure with refugees in their vicinity. This viewpoint is also supported by a high t-value of 6.80 and a significant p-value of 0.01, indicating that the presence of refugees does not necessarily heighten feelings of insecurity among host communities (Cuddy, 2011).

The mean scores for the items "Refugees have contributed to increased tensions between the host community and refugees" (2.87) and "Refugees are willing to work together with the host community to maintain peace and security" (2.79) highlight the notable differences in perceptions regarding conflict and cooperation. Although host communities see refugees as a source of increased tensions, refugees tend to view themselves as more willing to collaborate with the host community to uphold peace and security. This points to the necessity for enhanced communication and understanding between host communities and refugees to mitigate these differing perceptions (Putnam, 2000).

Similarly, the mean scores for "The host community perceives refugees as a source of conflict and violence" (2.77) and "Refugees have a positive attitude toward the host community and its values" (2.66) indicate significant disparities in how host communities and refugees evaluate and assess their respective valuations and responsibilities. Host communities predominantly see refugees as sources of conflict, although refugees are more inclined to regard themselves as having a positive attitude toward the values of the host community. This suggests a pressing need for greater understanding and empathy between both groups to address these different perceptions (Haidt, 2012).

In conclusion, the data in Table 2 demonstrates significant differences in the perceptions of host communities and refugees regarding the relationship and impact of refugees on their lives. While host communities often view refugees as a threat to peace and security, refugees generally see themselves as open to collaborate with host communities to foster peace. The findings underscore the importance of enhancing communication, understanding, and empathy between host communities and refugees to bridge these perceptual gaps.

Findings from Interviews on the Perceptions of Both Host Communities and Refugees

In this section, government officers, security officers, representatives from civil society organizations, and refugees were asked to share their perception of peace and security issues. The findings from the interviews on perceptions of both host communities and refugees highlight the complex and multifaceted nature of peace and security issues in the context of refugee-host community relationships. Several themes emerged from the interviews, which are discussed below.

(i) Greater communication, understanding, and empathy between host communities and refugees

"The presence of refugees in our area has created tensions between the host community and the refugees." We have received several reports of conflict and violence between the two groups. We are working to address these issues through increased security measures and community outreach programs." (Interview with a government official 1)

The need for greater communication, understanding, and empathy between host communities and refugees was a common theme that emerged from the interviews (UNHCR, 2020). The government official's statement that "the presence of refugees in our area has created tensions between the host community and refugees" suggests that misunderstandings and lack of empathy can contribute to conflicts between the two groups. Similarly, the security official's statement that "we are working to strike a balance between providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and maintaining peace and security in the host community" highlights the importance of understanding the needs and concerns of both groups.

(ii) The importance of building relationships and trust between the two groups

"We understand that the refugees are fleeing war and persecution, but we also have a responsibility to protect the host community's safety and security. We are working to strike a balance between providing humanitarian assistance to refugees and maintaining peace and security in the host community." (Interview with a security official 1).

The interviews also highlighted the importance of building relationships and trust between host communities and refugees (Crisp, 2016). The government official's statement that "we need to do more to address the root causes of conflict and violence in our area" suggests that addressing the underlying issues that lead to conflict is crucial for building trust and reducing tensions. Similarly, the civil society organization representative's statement that

"we believe that by building relationships and understanding, we can reduce tensions and promote peace and security" emphasizes the importance of building bridges between the two groups.

(iii) The need to address the root causes of conflict and violence

"We need to do more to address the root causes of conflict and violence in our area. We need to work with the host community and refugees to identify the underlying issues and find solutions that benefit everyone." (Interview with a government official 2).

The need to address the root causes of conflict and violence was a theme that emerged from several interviews (Harvey, 2011). The government official's statement that "we need to do more to address the root causes of conflict and violence in our area" suggests that addressing the underlying issues is crucial for promoting peace and security. Similarly, the refugee's statement that "I never thought that I would face more violence and conflict in my new home" highlights the need to address the root causes of conflict in both refugee-host community relationships.

(iv) The importance of recognizing the value of refugees as individuals displaced by war and persecution

"The host community is often misunderstood and marginalized. We are working to bridge gaps between the host community and refugees through education and cultural exchange programs. We believe that by building relationships and understanding, we can reduce tensions and promote peace and security." (Interview with a representative from a civil society organization 1).

"We should recognize that refugees are not just a burden but also a valuable asset to our community. They bring new skills, perspectives, and experiences that enrich our community. We should work to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all." (Interview with a representative from a civil society organization 2)

"The key is to build trust and understanding between the host community and the refugees." We should work together to address the common challenges we face, such as poverty, unemployment, and the lack of access to basic services." (Interview with a representative from a civil society organization 1).

The interviews also highlighted the importance of recognizing the value of refugees as individuals who have been displaced by war and persecution (Crisp, 2016). The civil society organization representative's statement that "refugees are not just a burden, but also a valuable asset to our community" suggests that recognizing the value of refugees can help promote peace and security. Similarly, the refugee's statement that "we are not just refugees; we are people who have been displaced by war and persecution" emphasizes the importance of recognizing the humanity and dignity of refugees.

(v) Violence against refugees from host communities

"I was fleeing war and persecution, but I was also fleeing the threat of violence and conflict. I never thought that I would face more violence and conflict in my new home. I am trying to make a new life for myself, but it is not easy." (Interview with a refugee from Nduta camp 1).

"I believe that we can work together with the host community to maintain peace and security. We need to communicate more effectively and understand each other's perspectives. We are not just refugees; we are people who have been displaced by war and persecution." (Interview with a refugee from Mtendile camp 1).

The interviews also highlighted the prevalence of violence against refugees from host communities (UNHCR, 2020). The refugee's statement that "I never thought that I would face more violence and conflict in my new home" suggests that violence against refugees is a significant issue that needs to be addressed. Similarly, the refugee's statement that "I am trying to make a new life for myself, but it is not easy" highlights the challenges faced by refugees fleeing violence and persecution.

(vi) The need for increased support and resources for both host communities and refugees

"I miss my home and family, but I am grateful for the opportunity to start a new life. I am trying to make the most of my situation, but it is not easy. I hope that 1 day, I will be able to return home safely." (Interview with a refugee from Nduta camp 2).

Finally, the interviews highlighted the need for increased support and resources for both host communities and refugees (Crisp, 2016). The refugee's statement that "I hope that one day I will be able to return home safely" suggests that refugees need support and resources to rebuild their lives. Similarly, a government official's statement that "we need to do more to address the root causes of conflict and violence in our area" suggests that host communities need support and resources to address these issues.

Quantitative findings on social and Economic Integration Between the Host Community and Refugees

The data presented in Table 3 offer insights into the social and economic integration of host communities and refugees. The findings indicate notable differences in how host communities and refugees perceive their relationships and interactions.

Table 3: Social and Economic Integration between host communities and refugees (N=90)

Item	Mean	Std. deviation	t value	Interpretation
Refugees form close relationships with their host communities	2.50	0.70	3.57***	High
Refugees participate in local social events and activities with their host communities.	2.35	0.76	3.09***	Low
The host community has accepted refugees as part of its social fabric.	3.33	0.62	5.37***	Very High
Refugees have access to social services and support from their host communities.	3.24	0.61	5.31***	High
The host community has mixed feelings about the presence of refugees in their area.	3.10	0.79	3.93***	High
Refugees form separate social networks from their host communities	3.05	0.59	5.16***	High
Refugees create jobs and opportunities for community members	2.98	0.66	4.51***	High
The host community has benefited economically from the presence of refugees in the area.	2.85	0.62	4.59***	High
Refugees have started their own businesses, thus contributing to the local economy.	2.48	0.65	3.81***	Low
The host community has limited job opportunities for refugees because of cultural or language barriers.	2.32	0.73	3.17***	Low
Refugees have access to economic resources and services from their host communities, such as loans and credit	2.21	0.89	2.48***	Low

***Significant at 0.01

The mean score of 2.50 (high) for the statement "Refugees have formed close relationships with the host community" indicates that, although some positive connections exist between refugees and host communities, there remains a considerable gap in social integration. This view is reinforced by a high t-value of 3.57 and a significant p-value of 0.01. It suggests that increased social interaction and communication between refugees and host communities are essential for building stronger relationships (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The mean score of 3.24 (high) for the statement "Refugees have access to social services and support from the host community" shows that host communities are offering some level of assistance to refugees. However, the low mean score of 2.32 for the statement "The host community has limited job opportunities for refugees due to cultural or language barriers" points to considerable obstacles to economic integration. This finding is bolstered by a high t-value of 3.17 and a significant p-value of 0.01, indicating a need for enhanced economic efficiency and job opportunities for refugees to facilitate their full integration into the host community (Kersting, 2011).

The very high mean score of 3.33 for "The host community has accepted refugees as part of their social fabric" highlights that host communities are generally welcoming to refugees. However, the low mean score of 2.21 for "Refugees have accessed economic resources and services from the host community, such as loans or credit facilities" reveals significant challenges in accessing economic resources and services. This perception is supported by a high t-value of 2.48 and a significant p-value of 0.01, suggesting the necessity for improved economic support and resources for refugees to achieve full integration into the host community (Haines, 2010). Generally, the data in Table 3 indicates significant differences in how host communities and refugees pursue social and economic integration. If there are some positive relationships between the two groups, substantial barriers to economic integration and limited job opportunities for refugees persist. These findings underscore the need for enhanced social interaction, communication, economic empowerment, and increased job opportunities for refugees to ensure their full integration into the host community.

Findings from interviews on the social and economic integration between the host community and refugees

Under this section, participants were asked to share their views regarding the status of social and economic integration between the host community and refugees in their respective camps. Here is what they had to say;

(i) The gap between social and economic integration

"While there are some positive relationships between refugees and host communities, a significant gap remains in social integration. We should increase social interaction and communication between refugees and host communities to build stronger relationships." (interview with the government officer 1)

"We recognize that there are significant barriers to economic integration, particularly cultural and/or language barriers. We should provide greater economic empowerment and job opportunities for refugees to fully integrate into the host community." (interview with the government officer 2)

"Our government has implemented policies and programs aimed at supporting refugees in their economic integration, such as job training programs and access to financial resources. However, more needs to be done to address the challenges faced by refugees." (interview with the government officer 1)

The findings suggest a significant gap in social and economic integration between refugees and host communities. This gap is attributed to a lack of social interaction and communication between the two groups, which can lead to misunderstandings and tensions (Government Officer 1, 2023). Lack of economic empowerment and job opportunities for refugees is also a significant barrier to their integration (Government officer 2, 2023).

The results of this study support the notion that social and economic integration is crucial for refugee settlement and integration (Ahmed & Fazel, 2017). The findings suggest that government and civil society organizations

have implemented policies and programs aimed at supporting refugees in their economic integration, but more needs to be done to address the challenges faced by refugees (Government Officer 1, 2023).

(ii) Tensions between refugee and host communities

"We have noticed that there are some tensions between refugees and host communities, particularly due to cultural differences and language barriers. However, we believe that with greater social interaction and communication, these tensions can be reduced." (interview with the security officers 1)

"We recognize that significant barriers exist to accessing economic resources and services for refugees. We should increase our efforts to provide more economic support and resources for refugees." (interview with the security officers 2)

"We have implemented community outreach programs and educational initiatives aimed at promoting social integration and reducing tensions between refugees and host communities." (interview with the security officers 2)

The findings suggest that tensions exist between refugees and host communities, particularly due to cultural differences and language barriers. However, the results also indicate that these tensions can be reduced through greater social interaction and communication (Security Officers 1, 2023). Implementing community outreach programs and education initiatives aimed at promoting social integration and reducing tensions between refugees and host communities is a positive step toward addressing this issue (Security Officers 2, 2023).

The findings of this study support the notion that tensions between refugees and host communities pose a significant challenge to refugee integration (Kagan & Lessard-Phillips, 2015). The results suggest that addressing these tensions requires a multifaceted approach that includes social interaction, communication, and education initiatives.

(iii) Lack of understanding and communication

"We have seen significant differences between the perceptions of host communities and refugees regarding their relationships and interactions. We believe that this is due to a lack of understanding and communication between the two groups." (interview with the representatives from civil society organizations 2)

"We recognize that there are significant barriers to economic integration, particularly cultural and/or language barriers. We should provide greater economic empowerment and job opportunities for refugees." (interview with the representatives from civil society organizations 1)

"We have implemented community development programs aimed at promoting social integration and reducing tensions between refugees and host communities. We will also provide education and training programs aimed at increasing economic opportunities for refugees." (interview with the representatives from civil society organizations 2)

"I have noticed that there are some positive relationships between myself and the host communities, but there is still a significant gap in social integration. I believe that with greater social interaction and communication, we can build stronger relationships." (interview with the refugee 2)

"I have found significant barriers to accessing economic resources and services. I believe that with greater economic support and resources, we can fully integrate into the host community." (interview with the refugee 3)

"I believe that the host community has accepted us as part of their social fabric. However, I think that there is still a need for greater understanding and communication between the two groups." (interview with the refugee 1)

The findings suggest a lack of understanding and communication between refugees and host communities, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflict. The results of this study support the notion that lack of understanding and communication are significant barriers to refugee integration (Ahmed & Fazel, 2017).

Implementing community development programs aimed at promoting social integration and reducing tensions between refugees and host communities is a positive step toward addressing this issue (Representatives from Civil Society Organizations 2, 2023). The provision of education and training programs aimed at increasing economic opportunities for refugees is also essential for their integration.

These findings suggest that the perceptions of host communities and refugees differ significantly regarding their social and economic integration. Although there are some positive relationships between refugees and host communities, significant barriers to economic integration and limited job opportunities remain for refugees. These findings suggest that there is a need for greater social interaction, communication, economic empowerment, and job opportunities for refugees to fully integrate into the host community.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS: This study aimed to

Conclusion

The study presents critical insights into the perceptions held by both host communities and refugees regarding their social and economic integration. The quantitative findings reveal significant differences in perspectives, with host communities often viewing refugees as potential risks while simultaneously feeling a sense of safety with the latter. Conversely, refugees express a willingness to collaborate with host communities in maintaining peace and security, despite feeling marginalized and facing barriers to integration. The qualitative interview data further emphasizes the necessity for increased communication, understanding, and empathy between the two groups to alleviate tensions and foster stronger relationships.

Implications

The contrasting perceptions of host communities and refugees have profound implications for peacebuilding, social cohesion, and economic development strategies. The apprehensions held by host communities could hinder the full integration of refugees, affecting not only the social fabric but also the economic potential of both groups. The presence of significant barriers to economic integration underscores the urgent need for comprehensive policies that address these challenges. Moreover, addressing the perceived threats and misconceptions about refugees is essential to foster a more inclusive environment that recognizes the value refugees bring to the host community.

Recommendations

- a) **Enhance Communication and Dialogue:** Develop community forums and initiatives that promote open dialogue between host communities and refugees to address misunderstandings and build trust. These initiatives can include workshops, cultural exchange programs, and joint community service projects.
- b) **Foster Economic Empowerment:** Implement targeted job training programs and language courses aimed at refugees to improve their employability and cultural understanding. Creating partnerships with local businesses can facilitate job placements and support the economic integration of refugees.
- c) **Increase Community Outreach and Support:** Strengthen community outreach programs by involving local leaders, civil society organizations, and refugees representatives to promote awareness of the benefits of diversity and the contributions of refugees to the local economy.
- d) **Address Root Causes of Tensions:** Conduct research to identify underlying causes of terrorisms and conflicts between host communities and refugees. This can guide the development of tailored interventions aimed at mitigating these issues.
- e) **Promote Inclusive Policies:** Ensure that policies and programs aimed at refugee integration are inclusive of the host community's needs and concerns. This can involve creating interdisciplinary committees that include representatives from both groups to oversee integration efforts.

f) Utilize Media and Awareness Campaigns: Launch media campaigns that highlight positive stories of refugees contributing to their host communities, focusing on themes of shared humanity, resilience, and collaboration.

By taking these steps, it is possible to foster a more harmonious coexistence between host communities and refugees, ultimately benefiting both groups and enhancing the overall social and economic well-being of the region.

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