

Demographic Dimensions and their Implications on the Incidence of Street Begging in
Urban Areas of Central Tanzania: The Case of Dodoma and Singida Municipalities

Baltazar M.L. Namwata, Maseke R. Mgabo and Provident Dimoso
Institute of Rural Development Planning, P.O.Box 138, Dodoma, Tanzania.
Corresponding author. Email: bnamwata@gmail.com

Abstract

The population of beggars on our streets and public spaces is growing exponentially in many urban areas of Tanzania. Today, their presence in the streets of urban areas of developing countries is recognized to be a serious problem that requires urgent redress. This problem is becoming acute and one of the development hindering factors in central zone Tanzania as compared to other zones. This study explores the implications of demographic dimensions on the incidence of street begging in urban areas of central Tanzania with Dodoma and Singida Municipalities as case studies. This study was conducted on different days at different streets and public spaces in Dodoma and Singida Municipalities to obtain data on incidence of street begging. A cross-sectional survey was employed involving 130 street beggars, 60 focus group members and 30 key informants. Structured questionnaires were administered on randomly selected beggars to obtain data on their demographic dimensions. Group discussions, key informant interview, and observations were also used to collect data relevant for the study. The data revealed high incidence of street begging on Friday and during public holidays. The demographic of street beggars reflect that begging is more pronounced among natives or indigenous, physical disabled, male, single, widowed, and Illiterates. Among others, the study recommends that deliberate efforts to improve the socio-economic security of the families of street beggars through empowerment programmes and to embark on public enlightenment on the negative consequences of begging on various dimensions of development.

Key words: Demographic dimensions, incidence, street beggars, street begging, beggary

1.0 Introduction

The appearance of beggars who seemed to spend most of their time on the streets and public spaces in many urban areas of developing countries can be traced back to the late 1960's. This situation is a reflection of urban complexities worldwide and has become a very common and familiar phenomenon for a long time. The population of beggars on our streets is growing exponentially. Today, their presence in the streets of urban areas of developing countries is recognized to be a serious problem that requires urgent redress. Not only have their numbers grown over the years, their lifestyles and the display of overtly aggressive behaviour make them the subjects of suspicion and hostility by the public at large and the law enforcement agencies in particular. The menace of street begging as a potential threat to the environmental, economic and social survival of humanity societal fabric is evident (Ogunkan and Fawole, 2009; Amman, 2006; CRISIS, 2003).

People engaged in begging themselves also recognized begging to be a 'problem'. To them, it's harsh, humiliating, demeaning, degrading and frustrating (Hindu, 2005; Lynch, 2005; Rowntree, 2009). Begging is recognized and cast as a 'problem' by diverse stakeholders, including the media, politicians, retailers and traders, law enforcement officers and agencies, welfare and social service providers, the general public and people who beg. Each of these stakeholders has a common interest in reducing the incidence of begging. The continued relevance of begging as both a political and a public policy problem is evidenced by extensive media coverage of the issue in recent years, together with governmental consideration of the regulation and governance of begging (Lynch, 2005; CRISIS, 2003; Kamala *et al.*, 2002; Maganga, 2008; Petro and Kombe, 2010).

Begging has been a serious problem confronting many urban areas across the globe. The situation becomes worse when it confronts urban areas of less developed nations. Despite the pronounced manifestation of this problem in developing countries, people still regard begging as a normal phenomenon (Ogunkan and Fawole, 2009; Adedibu, 1989). This picture is true of many urban areas of Tanzania where different categories of street beggars are conspicuously found in streets, motor parks, religious worship, markets,

venue of ceremonies among other public places begging for alms. The incidence of street begging has increased rapidly during the last decade in Tanzania. This problem is acute in urban areas of central zone where the population of street beggars in public spaces is growing as compared to other zones (Shekighenda, 2006).

The begging problem in Tanzania has to be seen on the basis of many factors that have occurred over time. Poverty is the most frequent precipitant of the problem of beggary. Beneath poverty lies the widespread scarcity of resources needed to lead a proper life. Other factors include physical disability, culture, the inadequacy of social security schemes, drug, alcohol and gambling dependencies. The plight of the street beggars, concentrated more in urban areas of central zone Tanzania is becoming worse rather than better (Namwata *et al*, 2010). As a result of the threat of widespread marginalization and exclusion, the beggars struggle to maintain or establish a viable social interaction among themselves. The modes of social interaction in the form of interpersonal relations enable the beggars to amend their loss of social articulation. As such, among others, demographic factors like ethnic background, gender, marital status, religion, education levels and body physique play a basic role in composing and patterning the beggars' informal social relationships and in determining the choice of friends (Demewozu, 2005).

In Tanzania, many urban authorities have made various efforts to tackle the problem of street begging but without setting strategies on how to make street beggars attaining their basic necessities of life. These efforts among others include sending street beggars back to their homes, reintegrating them with their families where possible and taking them to rehabilitation centers. As a result many urban authorities have been striving to control the influx of street beggars in their areas without success. A quick assessment of these efforts indicates that most of them are focused more on the symptoms rather than on prevention or eradication of the deeper structural causes of the problem (Nipashe, 2010; Petro and Kombe, 2010; Maganga, 2008). Despite the problems of begging to the socioeconomic development of Tanzanian urban centres, it is unfortunate that much research works have not been directed towards the implications of demographic dimensions on the incidence of street begging. We find very limited literature which directly focused on the problem

of street begging. This study therefore meant to bridge the gap which directly focuses on implications of demographic dimensions on the incidence of street begging in central zone of Tanzania in which Dodoma and Singida Municipalities were taken as case study areas.

2.0 Materials and Methods

This study on the implications of demographic dimensions on the incidence of street begging in urban areas was carried out in central zone Tanzania in which Dodoma and Singida Municipalities were taken as case study areas. This is due to the fact that central zone lead in production of street beggars in the country. Primary and secondary data were utilized in the study. Primary data were collected from street beggars, community members and local leadership. The secondary data were collected from various documentary sources such as journal papers, internet materials and other documents relevant for the study.

Since the street beggars keep moving it would have been very difficult to prepare any sampling frame, out of which to select the desired sample applying principles of random method. Instead, the places where the street beggars were generally found were selected. There is no way by which the representative nature of the sample can be verified except to say that street beggars have been selected from a very wide variety of public spaces, which may ensure a good representative. In this regard, relevant information of the study was collected from 130 street beggars, 60 focus group members and 30 key informants such as Mtaa or Ward Executive Officers and Social Welfare Officers. The study as whole draws from a wide range of data collection instruments so as to meet objectives of the study. These included documentary review, structure questionnaires, focus group discussions, key informant interview and observation techniques.

Qualitative and quantitative data were analyzed separately but in interpreting the data collected, quantitative and qualitative data is complementing and supplementing each other. Qualitative data obtained from participant observation, focus group discussions (FGDs) and interview with key informants were analyzed through themes and content

analysis. Subsequently, the responses from the questionnaires were coded, summarized and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to obtain frequency counts and percentages of various coded responses.

3.0 Results and Discussions

This section is trying to shed light on the implications of demographic dimensions on the incidence of street begging. The assumption is that the question of street beggars and begging life is connected to the dimensions of demographic realities that prevail in their families' and that of the local community. The demographic dimensions of the street beggars examined in this study were age, sex, marital status, educational level, household size, major sources of income, religion, place of birth, tribe and body physique.

3.1 Area of Residence of Street Beggars

Table 1 presents the distribution of street beggars by area of residence. The results show that street beggars were found in various residential areas across the municipalities. The variation in the incidence of begging so observed is adduced to area of residence of street beggars. In Dodoma municipality, a large population of street beggars came from various areas of residence as shown in Table 1 such as Dodoma Mjini (19%), Maili Mbili (11.4%) and Miyuji (10.1%). Other areas of residence are as shown in Table 1. For the case of Singida municipality most street beggars came from such areas as Kibaoni-Seduka (16%), Minga (12%), Kindai (10%), Stand ya Zamani (10%) and Unyankindi (8%). From this observation, it is evident that majority of street beggars in the study municipalities live in unplanned residential areas where the most of urban poor normally live. Consciousness of this fact is widely disseminated, yet many urban planners failed to reckon with a strong, often dominant influence of land use in generating social problems like street begging.

Table 1: Area of Residence of Street Beggars by Municipality

Dodoma Municipality		Singida Municipality	
<i>Mtaa or Village</i>	% (N)	<i>Mtaa or Village</i>	% (N)
Tatilai	1.3 (1)	Stand ya zamani	10.0 (5)
Miyuji	10.1 (8)	Mnung'une	8.0 (4)
Kikuyu	7.6 (6)	Ulyampiti	2.0 (1)
Maili mbili	11.4 (9)	Mtaa wa sokoni	2.0 (1)
Vyeyula	5.1 (4)	Nyanza	4.0 (2)
Ng'ong'ona	1.3 (1)	Kibaoni-Seduka	16.0 (8)
Michese	1.3 (1)	Kitungukia	4.0 (2)
Nzuguni	2.5 (2)	Michunduruni	4.0 (2)
Chinyoya	3.8 (3)	Minga	12.0 (6)
Mkonze	1.3 (1)	Sido	4.0 (2)
Chang'ombe	5.1 (4)	Unyankindi	8.0 (4)
Bahi	1.3 (1)	Mandewa	4.0 (2)
Kizota	3.8 (4)	Kindai	10.0 (5)
Majengo	6.3 (5)	Mwenge	4.0 (2)
Chadulu	7.6 (6)	Singida Mnangi	2.0 (1)
Dodoma Mjini	19.0 (15)	Mjini	2.0 (1)
Makole	1.3 (1)	Ihungukia	2.0 (1)
Chamwino	1.3 (1)	Sebuka	2.0 (1)
Mbabala	1.3 (1)		
Njedengwa	2.5 (2)		
Bahi road	1.3 (1)		
Masalato	2.5 (2)		
Bahi sokoni	1.3 (1)		
	100.0 (80)	Total	100.0 (50)

3.2 Ethnicity and Home of Origin of Street Beggars

Table 2 presents the distribution of street beggars by ethnicity and home of origin. The findings indicate that majority of the overall sampled beggars (93.0%) in both municipalities are indigenous living in their home areas. This imply that majority of beggars conduct their begging life in their home areas or regions. Very few overall sampled beggars (7%) migrate to other areas for some reasons where they find themselves engaging in street begging. However, Gogo people of Dodoma region were found mostly migrating as compared to the Nyaturu and Nyiramba of Singida region. It was also found that the migrants in Singida region were not willing to disclose their home origin while the migrants in Dodoma region revealed that they came from various home of origins. These findings suggest that some of the migrant street beggars came from different regions almost all over the country.

Table 2: Distribution of Street Beggars by Ethnicity and Home of Origin

Variable	Municipality		Total
	Dodoma	Singida	
Whether Indigenous or a Migrant	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
Indigenous	90.0 (72)	98.0 (49)	93.1 (121)
Migrant	10.0 (8)	2.0 (1)	6.9 (9)
Sub-total	100.0 (80)	100.0 (50)	100.0 (130)
If indigenous, tribe of the respondent			
Nyaturu	Nil	91.8 (45)	37.2 (45)
Nyiramba	Nil	8.2 (4)	3.3 (4)
Gogo	100.0 (72)	Nil	59.5 (72)
Sub-total	100.0 (72)	100.0 (49)	100.0 (121)
If Migrant, Place of origin (Region)			
Mwanza	Nil	100.0 (1)	11.1 (1)
Kigoma	12.5 (1)	Nil	11.1 (1)
Tabora	25.0 (2)	Nil	22.2 (2)
Singida	25.0 (2)	Nil	22.2 (2)
Mtwara	12.5 (1)	Nil	11.1 (1)
Morogoro	12.5 (1)	Nil	11.1 (1)
Dar Es Salaam	12.5 (1)	Nil	11.1 (1)
Sub-total	100.0 (8)	100.0 (1)	100.0 (9)

Furthermore, the findings in Table 3 suggest that majority sample beggars (50%) migrated to Dodoma municipality have been living there for more than five years. On the other hand, sampled beggars in Singida municipality did not disclose the time horizon over which they have stayed in the municipality. The migrant beggars in the study municipalities had various reasons that made them to migrate into the regions. Only one sampled respondent in Singida municipality mentioned official transfer as the reason for him to migrate into the municipality while majority of them did not respond. On the other hand, sample migrant beggars in Dodoma municipality mentioned seeking of employment, official transfer, follow of relatives in town and seeking medical care as the main reasons for migrating into the areas before they find themselves in begging life.

Table 3: Time Beggars Had Been in the Area and Reasons for Migrating

Variable	Municipality		Total
	Dodoma	Singida	
Time of Staying in the place	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
Less than one year	12.5 (1)	Nil	11.1 (1)
One year	12.5 (1)	Nil	11.1 (1)
Two years	12.5 (1)	Nil	11.1 (1)
Three years	12.5 (1)	Nil	11.1 (1)
More than five years	50.0 (4)	Nil	44.4 (4)
I don't remember	Nil	100.0 (1)	11.1 (1)
Sub-total	100.0 (8)	100.0 (1)	100.0 (9)
Reasons for Migrating to the Area			
Seeking employment	37.5 (3)	Nil	33.3 (3)
Official transfer	12.5 (1)	100.0 (1)	22.2 (2)
Had relatives in town	12.5 (1)	Nil	11.1 (1)
Seeking medical care	12.5 (1)	Nil	11.1 (1)
Sub-total	100.0 (8)	100.0 (1)	100.0 (9)

Nevertheless, Tambawal (2010) and Obidoa *et al.* (2007) asserted that the incidences of street beggars are sometimes attributed to cultural aspects. For example, begging is lower in southern Nigeria than the north suggestive of cultural dimension to the problem. For southerners, begging is a deviation except in Yoruba land where mothers of twin babies are suppose to beg for sometime. Where there is a beggar, there is a giver and for religious or any other reasons, several Nigerians give alms to the poor. In this study, researchers found that majority of sampled street beggars were originating from the study area. This conform with a survey conducted in five regions of Tanzania 2006 which reveals that many street children who form the majority of street beggars come from Dodoma, Coast Region comes second followed by Singida, Morogoro and Dar Es Salaam (Shekighenda, 2006).

3.3 Religion of Street Beggars

Table 4 shows the distribution of street beggars by municipalities. The findings show that in all the municipalities studied, majority of overall sampled street beggars (58.5%) were Christians against (41.5%) who were Muslims. However, the findings show that majority of sampled street beggars in Dodoma municipality are Christians (76.3%) as against as Muslims (23.7%). Likewise, the findings reveal that 70% of the beggars in Singida

municipality are Muslims against (23.7%) Christians. These findings in Table 4 suggest existence of a controversial on the religions of the sample street beggars across the municipalities. Also, the study suggests that most of the Gogo in Dodoma municipalities are Christians while Nyaturu and Nyiramba in Singida municipality are Muslims.

Table 4: Distribution of Street Beggars by Religion

Religion	Municipalities		Total
	Dodoma % (N)	Singida % (N)	
Christian	76.3 (61)	30.0 (15)	58.5 (76)
Muslim	23.7 (19)	70.0 (35)	41.5 (54)
Total	100.0 (80)	100.0 (50)	100.0 (130)

This distribution could be adduced to the fact that Christians usually fall prey to these beggars as they believe giving money to someone who begs is a charitable art. However, the Bible abhors laziness and therefore says in 2 Thessalonians 3:10 that, “For also when we were with you we enjoined you this, that if any man does not like to work, neither let him eat.” The Christian’s belief in giving which is captured in 1 Timothy 6:18-19, which says, “Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.”

The findings further suggest that most of sampled street beggars in Singida municipality who invariably are Muslims and to the general belief that the doctrine of Islam directly or indirectly encourages begging. Nevertheless, Tambawal (2010) and Obidoa *et al.* (2007) asserted that where there is a beggar, there is a giver, several Nigerians give alms to the poor basing on religious belief that they are counted as righteous people before God. On the other hand, the Qur’an (30:39) states: “That which you give in usury for increases through the property of (other) people, will have no increase with Allah: but that which you give for charity, seeking the Countenance of Allah, (will increase); it is those who will get a recompense multiplied.”

Muslims believe that “Begging is similar to scratching the flesh off your face; so if someone wants to save his face he should avoid it, except for asking from the ruler or asking in case of dire need.” Therefore the Muslim must not beg unless in extreme situations where life and honour is at risk.

3.4 Sex of Street Beggars

Table 5 presents the distribution of street beggars by sex. The study found that both men and women in the study municipalities were involved in begging activities. Majority of the overall sampled beggars (51.5%) are males as against as females (48.5%). This finding suggests that begging is more of male than female. This situation has a negative implication for city’s economy as men are culturally placed as family benefactors. Similar findings were reported by Ogunkan and Fawole (2009) who found that men are highly involved in begging related activities than women.

Table 5: Distribution of Street Beggars by Sex

Sex	Municipalities		Total % (N)
	Dodoma % (N)	Singida % (N)	
Male	58.8 (47)	40.0 (20)	51.5 (67)
Female	41.3 (33)	60.0 (30)	48.5 (63)
Total	100.0 (80)	100.0 (50)	100.0 (130)

However, it was found that the proportion of sampled female beggars in Singida municipality (60%) were relatively higher as opposed to sampled female beggars (41.3%) in Dodoma municipality. On the other hand, sampled male beggars (58.8%) in Dodoma municipality were relatively higher than sampled male beggars (40%) in Singida municipality. This study therefore suggests that the incidence of street begging by sex in the study municipalities is influenced by location among other factors.

3.5 Age of Street Beggars

Table 6 summarizes the age of street beggars. The ages of sampled street beggars ranged from 11 years and 89 years while their mean age of the beggars was 44 years.

Table 6: Distribution of Street Beggars by Age Group

Age Group (Years)	Municipalities		Total
	Dodoma	Singida	
	% (N)	% (N)	% (N)
Below 15	11.3 (9)	14.0 (7)	12.3 (16)
15-24	13.8 (11)	4.0 (2)	26.0 (13)
25-34	12.3 (9)	4.0 (2)	8.5 (11)
35-44	12.5 (10)	2.0 (1)	8.5 (11)
45-54	13.8 (11)	6.0 (3)	10.8 (14)
55-64	5.0 (4)	2.0 (1)	3.8 (5)
Above 64	21.3 (17)	30.0 (15)	24.6 (32)
I don't remember	11.3 (9)	38.0 (19)	21.5 (28)
Total	100.0 (80)	100.0 (50)	100.0 (130)
Minimum years=11, Maximum years=89 and Mean age=44 years			

The sampled street beggars were categorized into seven age groups. The findings indicate Singida municipality had a large percentage of sampled street beggars (38%) who did not remember their age as against as 11.3% in Dodoma municipality (Table 6). The findings show that most of sampled street beggars (26%) were in the age bracket of 15-24 years, 24.6% were above 64 years while 12.3% were below 15 years and 10.8% were 45-54 years. It can, therefore, be deduced that aged people constitute the high proportion of beggars in Dodoma and Singida municipalities. However, mixed responses were observed between and among the study districts. All the study municipalities seemed to have a large population of the aged street beggars. Likewise, within each study municipality the findings suggest that people engaging in begging life ranged from the young, teenagers to the old ones. This distribution reflects the relative distribution size of each of these groups in Dodoma and Singida municipalities.

3. 5 Education Levels of Street Beggars

The findings in Table 7 show that majority of the overall sampled street beggars (60.8%) had no formal education with Singida municipality having relatively higher proportion (66%) as compared to Dodoma municipality (52.5%) as indicated in Table 10. However a significant number of the sampled beggars accounting to 23.8% had not completed primary education majority of them being found in Dodoma municipality (26.3%) against (20%) found in Singida municipality. Some of the beggars have not completed standard

seven primary education level. These findings suggest that street begging is more pronounced amidst illiterates as majority of street beggars have no formal education.

Table 7: Distribution of Street Beggars by Education Level

Education Level	Municipality		Total % (N)
	Dodoma % (N)	Singida % (N)	
No formal education	52.5 (42)	66.0 (33)	57.7 (75)
Adult education	3.8 (3)	Nil	2.3 (3)
Uncompleted primary education	26.3 (21)	20.0 (10)	23.8 (31)
Completed primary education	17.5 (14)	2.0 (1)	11.5 (15)
Sub-total	100.0 (80)	100.0 (80)	100.0 (130)

Focus group discussions revealed that most of the sampled street beggars had no formal education due to such reasons as lack assistance from families (either because of families' economic difficulties and disharmony), cycle of poverty, peer pressure, lack of financial support and time to attend school. The influence of peers who are already in the street for begging and lack of the necessary material and financial support for schooling were identified as serious obstacles for not attending school.

3. 6 Marital Status of Street Beggars

Table 8 shows the distribution of street beggars by marital status. The findings indicate that majority of overall sampled street beggars (41.5%) were single. Dodoma municipality , 50% of its beggars were single as compared to Singida municipality which has 28% single beggars On the other hand, Singida municipality has 48% widowed of the total sampled street beggars as compared to 20% of those were found in Dodoma municipality . Table 8 reflects that Dodoma municipality has more married sampled street beggars (23.8%) as compared to Singida municipality (4%). However, results show that Singida municipality has more sampled street beggars who were separated (20%) as compared to Dodoma municipality (5%). Generally, the study findings reflect that begging is more of singles than married in Dodoma municipality as opposed to Singida municipality. This findings is contrary to what were observed by Ogunkan and Fawole (2009) who found that begging is more of married than single in Ogbomoso in Nigeria as

an indication that poverty and need to provide for the family form parts of the major reasons for begging among married women than single women.

Table 8: Distribution of Street Beggars by Marital Status

Marital Status	Municipalities		Total % (N)
	Dodoma % (N)	Singida % (N)	
Single	50.0 (40)	28.0 (14)	41.5 (54)
Married	23.8 (19)	4.0 (2)	16.2 (21)
Widowed	20.0 (16)	48.0 (24)	30.0 (39)
Separated	6.3 (5)	20.0 (10)	10.0 (13)
Total	100.0 (80)	100.0 (50)	100.0 (130)

5.2.7 Body Physique of Street Beggars

Table 9 shows the distribution of street beggars by body physique. Findings indicate that majority of all sampled street beggars (35.4 %) were physically impaired (legs and hands/arms) with Dodoma municipality leading to have more physically impaired beggars (36.3%) than Singida municipality (34%). Some sampled street beggars were visually impaired, skin impaired, hearing impaired, old, young children and some were suffering from leprosy and epilepsy. These findings suggest that body physique of the beggars compels them to engage in begging life as they do lack alternatives to sustain their livelihood as some of them are neglected by their family members.

Table 9: Body physique of the Street Beggars

Body physique	Municipalities		Total % (N)
	Dodoma % (N)	Singida % (N)	
Normal	22.5 (18)	12.0 (6)	18.5 (24)
Visually Impaired (<i>Kipofu</i>)	23.8 (19)	2.0 (1)	15.4 (20)
Physically Impaired (Hands/Arms or Legs)	36.3 (29)	34.0 (17)	35.4 (46)
Skin Impaired (Albino)	1.3 (1)	2.0 (1)	1.5 (2)
Hearing Impaired (<i>Kiziwi</i>)	Nil	2.0 (1)	0.8 (1)
Old	6.3 (5)	34.0 (17)	16.9 (22)
Child	7.5 (6)	14.0 (7)	10.0 (13)
Leprosy and epilepsy	2.5 (2)	Nil	1.5 (2)
Total	100.0 (80)	100.0 (50)	100.0 (130)

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

Demographic backgrounds of the street beggars contribute to the incidences of street begging. The study found that street begging is carried out by the diversity of people regardless of age, sex, religion, marital status and body physique. A short drive on the streets of Dodoma and Singida Municipalities reveals persons of both sexes, ages, all forms of disabilities and some without any kind of physical challenge along the streets begging for alms. There are also the mentally challenged who beg for alms, some rather menacingly or aggressively. A number of reasons have contributed to the increase of the population of street beggars and incidence of begging on the streets. These reasons include poverty, death of parents, family disintegration, traditional life, laziness and many more.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made in addressing the incidence of street begging in the study areas.

- To improve the socio-economic security of the families of street beggars through direct assistance programme with emphasis on various demographic dimensions.
- To embark on public enlightenment on the negative consequences of begging on various dimensions of development (social, economical, political, and environmental) of individuals, community and the nation at large.
- Policy planners and urban authorities must adopt multi-faceted, multi-targeted and multi-tiered approaches if they have to make any impact at all on the lives of street beggars.

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