

Revisiting the Concept of Peace: A Sociological Perspective

Mohamad Dindin Hamam Sidik^{1*}, Paelani Setia²

¹ University Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, Brunei Darussalam;

² UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Indonesia.

* Corresponding Author, Email: 23MR1704@unissa.bn

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ABSTRACT

In the ever-changing global context, understanding peace has become a primary focus across various disciplines, including sociology. The sociological paradigm offers a rich and relevant perspective in understanding the dynamics of conflict, reconciliation, and post-conflict development. However, there is still a need for deeper exploration of the concept of peace within the sociological context. This research aims to investigate the evolution of the concept of peace from a sociological perspective, ranging from classical to contemporary thoughts, and to explore the implications of the sociological paradigm in peace practices and policies. This study utilizes a literature review approach to gather and analyze prominent works in sociology relevant to the concept of peace. The analysis is conducted on the views of leading sociological thinkers and relevant research findings. The findings from this literature review indicate that the sociological paradigm provides profound insights into the evolution of the concept of peace, from classical thinkers such as Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, to contemporary approaches such as critical theory and feminism. The practical implications of the sociological paradigm in conflict resolution, reconciliation, and post-conflict development are also explored. This research underscores the importance of the sociological paradigm in understanding and resolving conflicts and post-conflict development. By considering the complexity of social, political, and cultural dynamics and applying a holistic and contextual approach in designing peace strategies, sociology can make a valuable contribution to promoting sustainable and inclusive peace.

ABSTRAK

Dalam konteks global yang terus berubah, pemahaman tentang perdamaian telah menjadi fokus utama dalam berbagai disiplin ilmu, termasuk sosiologi. Paradigma sosiologi menawarkan perspektif yang kaya dan relevan dalam memahami dinamika konflik, rekonsiliasi, dan pembangunan pasca konflik. Namun, pemahaman tentang konsep perdamaian dalam konteks sosiologis masih memerlukan eksplorasi yang lebih mendalam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki evolusi konsep perdamaian dari perspektif sosiologis, mulai dari pemikiran klasik hingga kontemporer, serta untuk mengeksplorasi implikasi paradigma sosiologi dalam praktik dan kebijakan perdamaian. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan tinjauan literatur untuk mengumpulkan dan menganalisis karya-karya terkemuka dalam bidang sosiologi yang relevan dengan konsep perdamaian. Analisis dilakukan terhadap pandangan

para pemikir sosiologi terkemuka serta temuan-temuan penelitian yang relevan. Temuan dari tinjauan literatur ini menunjukkan bahwa paradigma sosiologi memberikan wawasan yang mendalam tentang evolusi konsep perdamaian, dari pemikiran klasik seperti Durkheim, Weber, dan Marx, hingga pendekatan kontemporer seperti teori kritis dan feminisme. Implikasi praktis dari paradigma sosiologi dalam penyelesaian konflik, rekonsiliasi, dan pembangunan pasca konflik juga ditelusuri. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya paradigma sosiologi dalam pemahaman dan penyelesaian konflik serta pembangunan pasca konflik. Dengan mempertimbangkan kompleksitas dinamika sosial, politik, dan budaya, serta menerapkan pendekatan holistik dan kontekstual dalam merancang strategi perdamaian, sosiologi dapat memberikan kontribusi yang berharga dalam mempromosikan perdamaian yang berkelanjutan dan inklusif.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the constantly evolving global context, peace becomes a highly desired goal for many parties (Vogele, 2009). However, the definition and understanding of peace are not static but diverse depending on cultural, political, social, and economic contexts. Sociological perspectives offer rich insights into how societies understand and strive for peace.

In the journey of thought on peace, scholars such as Galtung (1968), Barash and Webel (2013), and Hoffman (2017) have offered diverse definitions. Galtung depicts peace not only as the absence of armed conflict but also as a fabric of social justice, equality, and shared well-being. Hoffman emphasizes that peace is a state where conflicts are managed through fair and democratic resolutions, outside of violent means. Meanwhile, Barash and Webel view peace as a social condition that fosters harmony among individuals and groups while promoting justice and shared prosperity.

While these definitions provide valuable insights, there are acknowledged gaps. Firstly, these definitions tend to focus on armed conflict or violence contexts and overlook aspects such as social inequality, intergroup tensions, or non-kinetic conflicts. Secondly, changes in social structures, power dynamics, and cultural values can influence understandings of peace over time, rendering existing definitions potentially outdated. Lastly, changes in sociological paradigms and contemporary issues such as information technology, globalization, or climate change may bring forth new aspects that need to be considered in understanding peace.

Therefore, this research aims to complement existing definitions of peace by identifying and exploring new dimensions from a sociological perspective. Through a holistic and contextual approach, this research will enrich understanding of peace by considering evolving social dynamics and contemporary issues not covered in previous definitions. Thus, it is hoped that this research will contribute to broadening insights into the concept of peace and updating understanding of the challenges faced in achieving it.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This article adopts an in-depth literature review approach to explore various views and concepts related to peace from a sociological perspective (Sangidu, 2007). Firstly, this research will conduct searches for prominent works in the field of sociology relevant to the theme of peace. This involves utilizing various academic databases and digital libraries to identify scholarly articles, books, research reports, and other sources that have made significant contributions to understanding the relationship between sociology and peace. Subsequently, the author will undertake in-depth analysis of these works, exploring trends, theories, and paradigms relevant to the understanding of peace. The analysis

process will involve critical reading and synthesis of information from various sources to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the social dynamics influencing peace.

In this research, the use of a literature review approach allows researchers to trace the evolution of thought on peace in the discipline of sociology over time. Additionally, this approach also enables the integration of various perspectives and approaches in understanding the complexity of peace in modern society. By combining theoretical and empirical analyses from various literature sources, this research yields a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities in achieving peace amidst the ever-changing social dynamics.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Changes in the Concept of Peace in Sociology

From the literature review conducted, this article depicts the evolution of the concept of peace within the discipline of sociology, ranging from classical thoughts to contemporary approaches. The discussion will encompass understanding of the sources of social conflict, factors supporting the formation of peace, as well as the roles of social institutions, power, and social structures in either fostering or hindering peace.

The evolution of the concept of peace within the discipline of sociology has undergone an intriguing journey, from classical theories to more complex contemporary approaches. In the early stages, classical sociological theories developed by figures such as Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx, provided initial understanding of the social dynamics underlying conflict and peace.

3.1.1. Peace According to Classical Sociologists

In Emile Durkheim's view, the concept of social integration serves as one of the main foundations in understanding peace within society. Durkheim developed this notion in his monumental work, *"The Division of Labor in Society"* (1893). In this book, Durkheim highlights the importance of the integrative strength of social norms in maintaining social stability. He states that when individuals feel bound by shared values and adhere to existing norms, conflicts can be minimized, and society can achieve a harmonious state conducive to peace. Durkheim asserts that strong social solidarity is key to preventing anomie, or social instability, which can trigger conflicts (Durkheim, 2014, p. 322).

Meanwhile, Max Weber emphasizes the role of social structures and power in influencing the dynamics of peace. In his famous work, *"Economy and Society"* (1922), Weber discusses various forms of power and social structures that influence human interactions. Weber identifies three types of authority: traditional, rational-legal, and charismatic-rational, all of which have implications for the creation of peace in society. Weber also considers the relationship between religion and economics in shaping social structures that can affect the possibility of achieving peace (Weber, 2019, p. 112).

On the other hand, Karl Marx views class conflict as the primary driver of social change. In his famous work, *"The Communist Manifesto"* (1848), Marx and Friedrich Engels outline their analysis of the conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie as the center of social dynamics in capitalist society. Marx believed that only through the proletarian revolution, the overthrow of the bourgeoisie by the working class, could society achieve sustainable peace. Marx's thoughts are further developed in his other works, such as *"Das Kapital"* (1867), where he delves deeper into the economic structures that produce class conflict (in Wendling, 2009).

Through these works, Durkheim, Weber, and Marx have made significant contributions to understanding the concept of peace from the perspective of classical sociology. By highlighting various aspects of social integration, social structure, and class conflict, their thoughts have helped shape a more holistic understanding of the factors influencing the achievement of peace within society.

3.1.2. Peace According to Modern Sociologists

In the development of modern theory in sociology, Talcott Parsons and Robert Merton emerge as significant figures in expanding the understanding of peace. Talcott Parsons, in his renowned work,

"*The Structure of Social Action*" (1949), developed the concept of structural functionalism, emphasizing the importance of social functions in maintaining societal stability. Parsons highlighted that social institutions play a crucial role in mediating conflicts and preserving peace. He emphasized that social institutions such as family, religion, and education have specific functions in providing structures and norms that enable harmonious social interactions. Thus, according to Parsons, stability and peace in society depend on the balance and integration among various social institutions.

Additionally, Robert Merton contributed his thoughts to the theory of imbalance in society. In his famous work, "*Social Theory and Social Structure*" (1968), Merton developed the concept of imbalance between socially accepted goals and means as a source of conflict. Merton pointed out that when individuals feel constrained in achieving goals considered significant in society, they resort to unconventional or even norm-violating means to attain them, which can lead to conflict and social instability. In this context, understanding this imbalance is crucial for formulating effective strategies in maintaining peace and social stability.

Talcott Parsons also emphasized the importance of stable social functions in preserving peace. In his concept of AGIL (Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration, and Latency), Parsons identified four basic functions in society: adaptation, goal attainment, integration, and latency. According to Parsons, a stable society is one that can fulfill these functional needs well (Parsons, 2013). With strong social integration and the diversity of well-functioning social institutions, conflicts can be contained, and peace can be maintained. In Parsons' view, the maintenance of social harmony and coherence greatly depends on the functionality of the overall social system.

Overall, figures like Parsons and Merton have made significant contributions to developing modern theories about peace in sociology. By emphasizing the role of social institutions, social processes, and social functions in mediating conflicts and maintaining peace, their thoughts have deepened the understanding of the factors influencing social stability and harmony in modern society.

3.1.3. Peace According to Contemporary Sociologists

Contemporary approaches in sociology, such as critical theory, feminism, and poststructuralist theory, have made significant contributions to understanding the concept of peace in a more complex and contextual manner. Critical theory, popularized by thinkers like Max Horkheimer, Theodor Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse, highlights social inequality and injustice as the primary sources of conflict that cannot be overcome solely by social integration (Giddens, 1989). They emphasize that a social system based on capitalism and exploitation leads to structural injustice, triggering tension and conflict within society. Thus, achieving sustainable peace requires fundamental social transformation to address these inequalities and injustices.

Feminism also provides a significant contribution to understanding peace, by highlighting the structures of gender power that influence conflict dynamics and peace (Warren & Cady, 1996). Feminist theory emphasizes that gender differences resulting from patriarchal domination can lead to inequality, violence, and conflict within society. Efforts to achieve true peace, according to the feminist perspective, require the elimination of power structures that support gender injustice and women's oppression (El-Bushra, 2007). By advocating for gender equality and addressing gender hierarchies, feminism seeks to build a more inclusive and fair foundation for peace.

On the other hand, poststructuralist theory emphasizes uncertainty and complexity in social relationships, highlighting that peace is not an absolute goal but determined by changing social constructions (Wright, 2004). Thinkers like Michel Foucault (2019) and Jacques Derrida (1978) emphasize that social structures, including norms and values, are not static or objective entities but constantly changing and shaped by power and knowledge. Thus, the idea of peace must be understood as a social construct influenced by different interests and powers within society. To promote more inclusive and sustainable peace, it is necessary to understand and challenge the social constructions that support inequality and oppression.

Through the approaches of critical theory, feminism, and poststructuralism, contemporary sociology offers deeper insights into the complexity of conflict and peace in society. By highlighting social inequality, gender power structures, and social constructions, these approaches enable us to view

peace as the result of broader social transformations, not just as a state achieved through social integration alone. Thus, a more holistic understanding of peace becomes possible, paving the way for more effective action in promoting sustainable and inclusive peace.

In conclusion, the evolution of the concept of peace in sociology reflects a journey of thought from classical to modern perspectives, and ultimately to contemporary approaches. From the viewpoint of classical sociology, thinkers like Durkheim, Weber, and Marx highlight the importance of social integration, social structure, and class conflict in understanding peace in society. They propose that peace can be achieved through harmonious social norms, the regulation of power structures, or revolutionary changes in the social system. In modern sociology, figures like Parsons and Merton expand the understanding of peace by emphasizing the role of social institutions, social processes, and social functions in mediating conflict. They see that stability and peace in society depend on the balance and integration among various social institutions. However, in contemporary approaches, such as critical theory, feminism, and poststructuralist theory, the concept of peace is challenged by highlighting social inequality, gender power structures, and changing social constructions as the main sources of conflict. These approaches show that peace is not absolute or static but determined by social change and power dynamics within society. Thus, the understanding of peace in sociology undergoes a rich evolution from classical to modern perspectives, and ultimately to more complex and contextual contemporary approaches.

3.2. The Sociological Paradigm in Conflict Resolution

The sociological paradigm plays a crucial role in understanding and resolving conflicts within society (Kinloch, 2005). One relevant paradigm in this context is the structural functionalist approach. According to this approach, conflict arises due to imbalance or dysfunction within social structures, and peace can be achieved through better integration among various social elements (Cole, 1966). For example, in traditional societies with strong hierarchical structures, conflict often arises due to inequalities in the distribution of power and resources. However, with improved social integration through social institutions such as family, religion, and education, conflict can be mitigated and peace can be maintained.

Additionally, the conflict approach in sociology highlights that conflict is a natural part of complex social dynamics. Conflict theory, developed by figures like Karl Marx, emphasizes that conflict occurs due to inequalities in the distribution of resources and power in society (Bartos & Wehr, 2002). For instance, class conflict arises due to differences in interests between capitalists and workers, where capitalists seek to maintain control over production and resource distribution while workers strive to improve working conditions and labor rights. Conflict resolution within this paradigm often involves restructuring the social system to create greater equality.

Furthermore, the symbolic approach in sociology highlights the importance of interpretation and meaning in the processes of conflict and peace (Herbert, 1972). According to this approach, conflict often arises due to differences in understanding and interpretation of diverse social symbols. For example, conflicts between ethnic or religious groups can be triggered by differences in perceptions of identity and beliefs. Conflict resolution within this approach involves dialogue and negotiation to achieve shared understanding and reconciliation.

However, contemporary approaches such as critical theory and feminism emphasize that conflict resolution is not only about addressing symptoms or symbols but also about changing social structures that support inequality and oppression (Wright, 2004). For instance, critical theory emphasizes the importance of addressing the underlying social and economic injustices that drive conflict, while feminism highlights the role of gender power structures in shaping conflict dynamics. Conflict resolution within these approaches involves fundamental social and political changes to create a fairer and more inclusive society.

Thus, the sociological paradigm offers various different approaches to conflict resolution within society. From the structural functionalist approach to conflict theory, symbolic approach, and contemporary approaches like critical theory and feminism, each approach has its uniqueness and relevance in the context of conflict resolution. Through a deep understanding of social dynamics and

power structures, sociology can provide valuable insights to promote peace and justice in this complex society.

3.3. Sociological Approach to Reconciliation

Sociological approaches provide valuable perspectives in the context of reconciliation among individuals, groups, or communities involved in conflict (Trimikliniotis, 2013). One relevant approach is the symbolic approach, which highlights the importance of meaning, interpretation, and communication in the reconciliation process. In this context, reconciliation is not only about ending conflict physically but also about understanding and addressing its underlying differences. For example, in cases of ethnic conflict in a country, the reconciliation process may involve efforts to understand and respect the culture, language, and identity of each group fairly.

Furthermore, the structural functionalist approach can also contribute to reconciliation by emphasizing the importance of social integration in maintaining peace (O'Donnell & Perley, 2016). In societies affected by conflict, structural functionalism emphasizes that reconciliation can be achieved through balance and harmonious interaction among various social institutions. For example, in post-conflict reconciliation processes, building inclusive and transparent democratic institutions can help strengthen social integration and promote sustainable peace.

On the other hand, the conflict approach emphasizes the importance of addressing the underlying inequalities and injustices that drive conflict as a first step in the reconciliation process (Nets-Zehngut, 2007). Conflict theory highlights that meaningful reconciliation not only involves resolving conflict directly but also addressing the structural roots of the conflict. For example, in cases of socio-economic conflict between the working class and capitalists, the reconciliation process may involve policy reforms to address income disparities and improve access to economic resources.

Contemporary approaches such as critical theory and feminism also provide valuable insights in the context of reconciliation (Trimikliniotis, 2013). Critical theory emphasizes the importance of confronting social and structural injustices in society as part of the reconciliation process. Creating space for critical dialogue and community engagement in social change can be crucial steps in improving intergroup relations affected by conflict. Meanwhile, feminism highlights the role of gender power structures in shaping conflict dynamics and reconciliation. Efforts to advocate for gender equality and address gender hierarchies can be crucial steps in achieving inclusive and sustainable reconciliation.

Thus, the sociological paradigm offers rich and diverse insights in the context of reconciliation among groups or individuals involved in conflict. Through different approaches such as the symbolic approach, structural functionalism, conflict theory, critical theory, and feminism, sociology can provide a comprehensive framework for understanding conflict dynamics and formulating effective reconciliation strategies. By acknowledging the complexity and diversity of society, as well as the structural roots of conflict, meaningful and sustainable reconciliation can be achieved.

3.4. Sociological Approach in Post-Conflict Development

Sociological approaches provide a crucial framework in post-conflict development, involving efforts to restore communities affected by armed conflict or severe social tensions (Frezzo, 2011). One relevant approach is structural functionalism, which emphasizes the importance of social integration in maintaining peace and facilitating the development process. In the post-conflict context, structural functionalism highlights the need to strengthen social institutions that can mediate conflict and promote social cohesion (Daho et al., 2019). For example, following ethnic conflict in a country, efforts to rebuild inclusive democratic institutions and enhance civil society participation can help restore trust among ethnic groups and promote sustainable peace.

The conflict approach is also essential in post-conflict development as it underscores the role of structural factors and social injustices as the root causes of armed conflict or social violence. Conflict theory emphasizes the need to address inequalities in resource distribution and power as key steps in the post-conflict development process (J. Brewer, 2013). For example, in the context of post-conflict economic recovery, it is crucial to focus on inclusive development that addresses economic disparities

among various societal groups. This may involve policies supporting fairer access to economic resources and equal livelihood opportunities.

Moreover, the symbolic approach is relevant in post-conflict development as it emphasizes the importance of understanding and respecting diverse meanings and identities in conflict-affected societies (J. D. Brewer et al., 2018). In the post-conflict context, reconciliation and development processes often involve efforts to understand and respect the culture, language, and identity of each group fairly. For example, in interethnic reconciliation efforts, it is important to strengthen dialogue between groups and build projects that promote understanding and cross-ethnic cooperation.

Contemporary approaches such as critical theory and feminism also provide valuable insights into post-conflict development. Critical theory highlights the need to confront social and structural injustices in society as part of the post-conflict development process (J. Brewer, 2013). This includes identifying and addressing the underlying inequalities and oppressions that drive conflict, as well as advocating for fundamental social and political changes. Meanwhile, feminism emphasizes the role of gender power structures in shaping conflict dynamics and post-conflict development. Efforts to advocate for gender equality and address gender hierarchies can help improve intergroup relations and promote inclusive and sustainable development.

Thus, the sociological paradigm offers a crucial framework in post-conflict development, recognizing the complexity and diversity of the involved societies. Through different approaches such as structural functionalism, conflict theory, the symbolic approach, critical theory, and feminism, sociology can provide comprehensive insights in formulating effective development strategies. By understanding the roots of conflict and inequality in post-conflict societies and adopting inclusive and sustainable approaches, meaningful and sustainable post-conflict development can be achieved.

3.5. Implications for Peace Practices and Policies

The implications of the sociological paradigm for peace practices and policies have significant effects on efforts to build and maintain peace in conflict-affected societies. One major implication is the need for a holistic and contextual approach in designing effective peace strategies (Brewer et al., 2018). Based on the sociological paradigm, this approach involves acknowledging the complexity of social, political, and cultural dynamics in conflict-involved communities.

For example, in the context of ethnic conflict in Indonesia, a holistic approach would consider various dimensions of conflict, including cultural, religious, and historical aspects that influence conflict and peace dynamics. In efforts to build peace, policies should encompass promoting inter-ethnic dialogue, deep cultural understanding, and the inclusion of all stakeholders involved in the peace process.

Furthermore, the implications of the sociological paradigm for peace practices emphasize the importance of involving civil society and community groups directly affected by conflict in the peace process (Trimikliniotis, 2013). This approach reflects the principle of community participation in peacebuilding advocated by the sociological paradigm. By engaging civil society, peace policies and practices can become more inclusive and representative of the interests and aspirations of various groups in society.

In the case of Indonesia, a tangible example of this implication is the peace process in Aceh in the early 2000s. The conflict between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement (GAM) had lasted for decades, causing many casualties (Waizenegger & Hyndman, 2016). Through a peace process involving dialogue between the government and GAM, as well as active participation from civil society and local community groups, the Helsinki peace agreement in 2005 was finally achieved (Ziegenhain, 2010). This agreement allowed Aceh to have greater autonomy and rebuild peace and stability in the region.

Furthermore, the sociological paradigm also highlights the importance of considering social inequality and justice aspects in peace efforts. This implication suggests that sustainable peace must address and overcome the inequalities underlying conflict, such as injustice in resource distribution

or human rights (J. Brewer, 2013). By taking these aspects into account, peace policies and practices can help address the structural roots of conflict and create a stronger foundation for sustainable peace.

As a case example, in Papua, the conflict between separatist groups and the Indonesian government has caused instability and violence for decades (Samudro et al., 2022). The implications of the sociological paradigm allow for considering social inequality and justice in peace efforts in Papua. Measures such as providing space for greater autonomy aspirations, promoting intergroup dialogue, and ensuring the protection of human rights are crucial in designing effective peace policies in the region.

Moreover, the sociological paradigm also emphasizes the importance of considering power dynamics and social structures in peace practices and policies. This implication highlights that peace policies must address the unequal distribution of power and ensure equal participation from all parties involved in the conflict (J. Brewer, 2013). By understanding and addressing unfair power structures, peace practices can become more inclusive and effective in promoting sustainable peace.

In this context, the implementation of peace in Maluku is a concrete example of the implications of the sociological paradigm for peace practices and policies. The conflict between Muslim and Christian communities in Maluku has resulted in violence and tension for years (Amirrachman, 2012). However, through efforts involving interfaith dialogue, inter-community reconciliation, and inclusive socio-economic development, peace has been restored in the region, creating sustainable stability and prosperity for the people of Maluku.

Thus, the sociological paradigm provides a crucial foundation for designing, implementing, and evaluating peace practices and policies. By considering principles of community participation, social inequality, justice, and power distribution, peace practices can become more effective in creating sustainable and inclusive peace. Cases in Indonesia, such as the peace process in Aceh and Maluku, provide concrete examples of how the implications of the sociological paradigm can be applied in real-world peace practices.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this research reveal that the sociological paradigm makes a substantial contribution to understanding and resolving conflicts as well as post-conflict development. These findings highlight the complexity of social, political, and cultural dynamics that influence peace, as well as the importance of holistic and contextual approaches in designing effective peace strategies.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive approach to analyzing the concept of peace from various sociological perspectives, ranging from classical to contemporary. By exploring the views of leading sociological thinkers such as Durkheim, Weber, Marx, to critical theory and feminism, this article provides deep insights into the evolution of the concept of peace and its implications for peace practices and policies.

Recommendations for future research include deepening the understanding of the relationship between social structure, inequality, and peace, as well as applying the findings from this article in more specific local contexts. Additionally, future research could further explore the implementation of sociology-based peace practices in real conflict cases in various countries, including Indonesia, to evaluate the successes and challenges in achieving sustainable peace. Thus, this article contributes valuable insights into expanding the understanding of the concept of peace from a sociological perspective and encourages further research to develop more inclusive, effective, and sustainable peace strategies in the future.

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