As a professor who has come out of a history in various social movements, I have often asked myself: "How do I justify my teaching and research objectives without losing my values to
advance progressive social change?" How do I carry out research that does not belittle or hurt our communities? Is it possible to be a critical activist, a researcher, a committed teacher, and a dedicated learner?

Contrary to the positivist view that academicians should remain neutral both in their classroom and research, I present some examples from my own experience of the connections that can be made between teaching, research, and action.

My research and teaching correspond with aspects of the participatory action approach method, particularly in the explicit connections made between social research and action (Maurasse, 2001; Zlotkowski, 1998; Nyden, Figert, Shibley, and Burrows, 1997; Ostrow and Enos, 1999; Fals-Borda and Rahman, 1991; Whyte, 1991; Greenwood and Levin, 1998). Coming from an activist background, I have had to find a place for combining the roles of professor, researcher and activist. In the area of research, I have had to resolve the issue that my data was collected in the dual roles of researcher and participant. In this type of research, one is involved in the process of social change while simultaneously describing the world of the participants through their eyes. In the area of teaching, I have implemented a style of critical pedagogy that involves the students both inside and outside the classroom.

The banking concept of pedagogy is still a widely used methodology in the college classroom. This method of teaching and research is based on the premise that the teacher "educates" while the students "memorize" and feed back to the teacher
whatever information is absorbed. With this type of pedagogy, there is little space for ongoing interaction among the students and between the students and the teacher. An alternative pedagogy is one that draws on the practice of participatory learning and research as a means of advancing classroom collaboration and simultaneously drawing vivid connections between lived experience and academic concepts or theories (Aparicio & Jose-Kampfner, 1995; Cantor, 1995; Jacoby, 1996; Buroway, 2000; Darder, 2001).

Background to Connections Between Action and Research

In my activist and academic experience, I have been part of various movements to create social change by combining participation, research, and action. In the city of Monterey Park, through the Coalition for Harmony in Monterey Park, I was not only involved in an effort to overturn an English Only resolution, I was also involved in a larger movement to defeat the anti-immigrant and pro-growth trends in the city.¹ As president of the San Gabriel Valley Chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), I was also part of a group that actively sought to ensure more visible representation of Latinos in all aspects of city and county government. As a co-chair of the Multi-Ethnic Task Force and chair of the Alhambra School District Human Relations Advisory Committee, I helped advance coalition-building efforts to establish multicultural and conflict resolution programs in the local high schools. In 1988 and 1990, I complemented this activity by working as a researcher with
Professor John Horton of the UCLA Department of Sociology in the community of Monterey Park. Over the next two years, our research was variously funded and supported by the Institute of American Cultures and by the Changing Relations Project of the Ford Foundation. In 1989, in conjunction with the Ford Foundation Project, I became a member of a seven-member local research team assigned to a study of political relations between newcomer immigrants and established community residents. Our research was part of a national study about the impact of immigration on everyday life in six communities: Miami, Houston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Monterey Park, and Garden City, Kansas. This national project emphasized the use of critical ethnography as a means of deciphering how day-to-day interaction was related to the issues of class and power. To avoid assuming static ethnic entities, we focused on how political agendas form as a result of relations between immigrants and established residents (Horton, 1995). I incorporated these concerns into my own research by observing sites, which were a part of my everyday life in the city, including: the neighborhood I lived in, the sports’ clubs in which my sons participated, and the community organizations and coalitions that I helped to organize. While my approach focused primarily on observations, they were complemented with formal and informal interviews. Further, I used various sources that derive theory (grounded theory approach) through the data collection techniques of participant observation, interviewing, writing and coding field notes and data analysis (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1995; Lofland and Lofland, 1995; Strauss and Corbin, 1990).
Although I used the grounded theory approach as the primary means of gathering information, I did not totally fit into this methodology since I was more than a participant observer in the process. My involvement as a leader in various community neighborhood and civic groups before the research had begun made it impossible for me to be a neutral observer.

My data, as a result, was collected in the dual roles of researcher and activist by combining participation, action, and research. On the one hand, this allowed me to have a closer feel for the activities and trends in the community. On the other, it resulted in criticisms raised by some who disagreed with my public positions. For example, the former Mayor of Monterey Park Barry Hatch, openly stated in a Los Angeles Times article that the "Changing Communities" study would be biased because I was part of it (Hudson, 1988).

Linking Action and Research

The participants in the coalitions that I was involved in were not as worried about our study being "biased" as they were concerned with finding solutions to the many problems that they confronted in the community and schools. I was considered an "insider" by these coalitions since I lived with my family in the community and since I had children in the district schools. They also knew that I was a researcher from my having told them or from having read about it in the local newspapers.

What we had in common was finding specific solutions to problems of ethnic/racial conflict in the community. When an all-White city council passed an English only resolution calling for
the use of English only in all the city literature, I was part of a group of multi-ethnic residents that banded together to form the Coalition for Harmony in Monterey Park (CHAMP). Together, we were able to defeat the ordinance and eventually vote out of office its main proponents. Further, we were able to elect candidates that called for planned development without categorizing the issue of "growth" in anti-immigrant terms.

By working actively in these coalitions, I was able to develop an ongoing dialogue with the participants that allowed me to serve in both the capacities of an active participant and a researcher. In this process we not only engaged in analysis and reflection, we challenged each other and began to develop theories and strategies for dealing with the rise of ethnic/racial divisions in the city.

As conflict moved from the city hall level to local schools, I was able to join in other coalition-building efforts. After a series of fights between Latino and Chinese students at Mark Keppel High School, two separate coalitions of parents were formed. The Asian Coalition, led by the Chinese American Parents and Teachers Association of Southern California, included twenty-one different Asian groups. This group was largely composed of Chinese professionals including teachers, teacher's aides, and bi-lingual social service workers. The other coalition, the Coalition for Equality, was predominately Latino with a small handful of White parents. At first, these coalitions were not able to work together. Various members in both coalitions promoted cultural and class differences as reasons for not coming
together. After numerous meetings between the leaders in the Latino and Asian Pacific organization, they were able to overcome these differences to form one coalition, the Multi-Cultural Community Association.

Continued pressure by the Multi-Cultural Community Association on school administrators led to the establishment of an official advisory group to the school board, the Alhambra School District Human Relations Advisory Committee. This thirty-member committee included broad representation from various groups including the: Multi-Cultural Community Association, Parent-Teacher Association, teacher's union, staff, administrators, and student representatives from the district's three high schools.

In this committee, I worked in the dual roles of researcher and committee chair. As a researcher, I worked alongside the community representatives to provide concrete evidence about the significance of ethnic/racial conflict in the school district. Together, we carried out a survey of 1500 students and 300 limited English-speaking students in English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. The results showed that 86% of the English-Speaking students at Mark Keppel High School and a majority of the students at all three high schools perceived that racial tensions were indeed a big problem.

Further, we utilized school district reports to establish that Latinos had a disproportionate percentage of student expulsions and that they were being tracked into the lower-level non-college track courses.
With this research in hand, the Multi-Cultural Community Association was able to rally the various ethnic groups around a ten-point plan that included the abolishment of an outdated tracking system.

Further, the committee wrote and passed through the school board, a policy to deal with hate crime motivated behavior. This policy required all principals to develop a school-wide plan for creating an environment that would allow all persons "to realize their full individual potential through understanding and appreciation of society's diversity of race, ethnic background, national origin, religious belief, sex, age, disability, or sexual orientation." As part of this policy, the school district institutionalized conflict resolution classes as part of the curriculum and gave students the option of mediation as an alternative to expulsion (Calderon, 1995)

In these examples, the coalition leaders and researchers developed concrete theories through "co generative dialogue" to develop "empowering" plans of action (Eldin and Levin, 1991). In both the Monterey Park and Alhambra school district coalition efforts, participants went beyond cultural differences to find the structural foundations of the problems. Hence, the participants or "insiders" were not just sources of data but were also active participants in gathering the data and utilizing it to create institutional change.

At the same time, as both a participant and researcher in the process, I could not function in the traditional research role as a passive observer. I clearly influenced the process, the content
of the research, and the outcomes. I had common goals with the community leaders and coalition participants to find solutions to practical problems and to learn lessons that could be used elsewhere.

Critical Pedagogy

When I began my career as a Professor, I implemented a pedagogy of teaching that, similar to my research methodology, aimed at constructing a culture of connecting the classroom with participatory and lived experience.

To advance a culture of action and participation, I practiced what Ira Shor, in his book *Empowering Education*, calls “critical-democratic pedagogy.” This technique seeks to place the readings and classroom activities in the context of the lived experience of the students (Shor, 1992). In this type of problem-posing class, I utilize both generative and topical themes to create dialogue on the subject matter. Generative themes “grow out of student culture and express problematic conditions in daily life that are useful for generating critical discussion (Shor: 55)” The topical and academic themes emerge from our readings or research in the field.

In my Race and Ethnic Relations class, I have the students read sections from Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* to emphasize that we are all students and teachers who have the capacity to create culture. I then challenge the students to learn from each other, to share knowledge, and to critically analyze where their experience fits in with that of the literature.
In this class, I use a combination of readings that promote a comprehensive and critical study of the significant concepts, histories, and issues in the field: Racial Formations in the U. S. by Omi and Winant, Racial and Ethnic Relations by Joe and Clairece Boother Feagin, A Different Mirror by Ronald Takaki, Racial Fault Lines by Tomas Almaguer, and Race, Class, and Gender by Margaret Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins. With the use of these readings as a foundation for conceptual dialogue, I fashion this class as one big society with aspects of structure and segmentation. I purposely divide the students into various types of "cultural" discussion groups. One type is randomly selected and usually multi-ethnic. Another is divided according to various novels that deal with the everyday lives of individuals that face the obstacles of racial, class, gender, or sexuality inequalities. The use of novels, particularly autobiographies, is another part of implementing a critical pedagogy that draws on both the lived experience of the authors as well as the students.

Discussion groups focusing on the novels are required to identify major themes, relate them to course concepts, and develop class presentations that use creative multicultural mediums. In implementing this exercise, students have come up with all types of creative presentations that integrate critical dialogue and theory with life experiences. One group, focusing on Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye, created a combination of original poetry, rap, and video to express their idea that "race is a pigment of our imagination." The video included interviews of shoppers at a nearby mall. After being shown pictures of
various individuals representing different racial/ethnic groups, shoppers were asked to point out the one that they thought most represented their conception of “beauty.” The results of this creative exercise sparked an ongoing dialogue on the role that society plays in the formation of ideas regarding race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. Another group, utilizing Sandra Cisneros's description of a barrio in *The House on Mango Street*, presented a video comparing a nearby "Latino barrio" to the more affluent areas of Los Angeles. Students in another group utilized John Okada's *No No Boy* and the medium of theater to present a play about the troubles that Japanese Americans faced in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor. After reading Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, another group used poetry, film, and music to describe the relocation of Native Americans and the obstacles that they confront when moving from the familiarity of the reservation to the alienation of urban cities. A group of students from varied backgrounds read the book *Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou and applied its content to various stratification theories. In the process of deepening their understanding of these theories, they found connections to their own lived experience and shared this collective interpretation through the creation of a wall-sized mural. As they worked on the project, I observed how students from varying ethnic, class, and gender backgrounds could collaborate collectively to produce a masterpiece. Other novels which students have used in their presentations include: Amy Tan’s *Joy Luck Club*, Alex Haley's
Malcolm X, Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, and Luis Rodriguez's *Always Running*.

The grading for this exercise requires students to write a paper connecting the concepts outlined in the texts to the main themes that are pulled out of the novels. A group grade is given for the class presentations based on the cohesiveness of the presentation, the connection of novel themes made to class concepts, and the effectiveness of the creative multicultural mediums used.

The final research paper for this class requires students to utilize the ideas of Freire in examining whether a chosen site (institution, group, movement, or community) is advancing a process of "liberation" or whether its actions serve to merely advance the process of "domestication."

**PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNITED FARMWORKER’S UNION**

Although the readings and exercises in my classes relate to the lived experiences of the authors and students, there is no comparison to the type of learning that involves the students outside the classroom.

Having come from a farm worker background and having worked with the United Farm Worker’s union in the early 1970's, I was moved to develop a class that could create dialogue on "new social movements" theory as applied to a concrete movement: that of the United Farm Workers. By utilizing union contacts that I knew from my early organizing efforts with the farm workers, I worked with them to develop a participatory action class that is now in its eighth year of implementation.
In that class, called Rural and Urban Social Movements, we spend the first half of the semester studying social movement theories and the historical foundations of farm worker's unions in the United States (Barger & Reza, 1994; Weber, 1994, Wells, 1996, Broyles-Gonzales, 1994; Del Castillo & Garcia 1995; Buss, 1993; Edid, 1994; Ross, 1989; Scharlin & Villanueva, 1992, Rose, 1990).

During the Spring Break, I take the students to the central headquarters of the United Farm Workers Union in La Paz to observe and experience firsthand how the union is organized internally and externally. In return for the union's hospitality and shared knowledge, the students contribute their skills and abilities with the various segments of the farm worker community. Since the initial Spring Break in 1995, the students have worked in various offices of the union doing data entry, archive filing, law research, union by-laws collating, and advocacy planning. In addition, students have joined in organizing actions in nearby cities to support the contract efforts of the union. On the last day of the visit, the students use the medium of theatre to present various skits regarding their service learning experiences. One skit, for example, compared a Spring Break in Tijuana with the UFW Alternative Spring Break. The Tijuana Spring Break depicted students lying on the beach, drinking beer, and partying. The UFW Alternative Spring Break chronicled the student's experience in cleaning up after a flood, working in the UFW offices, and planting roses at Cesar Chavez's gravesite.
In the past eight years students have returned from La Paz and organized a campus memorial commemoration to Cesar Chavez and all farm workers. This day, conjoined to fall on the same day as Cesar Chavez's birthday, has included the students' skits presented at La Paz, speeches by representatives from the United Farm Worker’s Union, mariachi music, and ballet folklorico.

Eight years ago, students organized a fast to boycott grapes in the College's cafeteria. Eighty one year old Brother Pete Velasco, one of the original Filipino strikers in the grape fields, joined the students in their negotiations with the Marriott Corporation. With the president of the college supporting the fast, the Corporation signed a letter that they would no longer serve grapes in the college cafeteria. In the aftermath of this victory, Brother Pete passed away in the fall of 1995. The union acknowledged the "deepness" of relations that had developed between the union and the students by inviting various Pitzer students to attend the funeral, to help carry his casket in a union procession, and to take turns in holding UFW flags at an all-night vigil.

The collaboration between Pitzer College students and the UFW is now a year-round activity. In the spring of 2000, the Pitzer College United Farm Worker student organization drew over three hundred supporters to a speech by UFW co-founder Dolores Huerta. In response to a UFW campaign in the strawberry fields, students negotiated the removal of all strawberries from the college’s cafeteria. Some students committed themselves to the UFW’s Strawberry campaign through a “Union Summer” project and
are now working full-time for the union. While some students have gone on to make presentations in local high schools about their experiences, others have written research papers for academic conferences. For example, various Pitzer College students have written thesis papers that have been motivated by their work with the UFW (McGougan, 2000; Camacho, 1995, Espinosa, 1999).

Participatory Action Research in a Day Labor Center

A participatory style of activism and research has also been the foundation for the development of a day labor center in the city of Pomona, California. In July of 1997, the city of Pomona passed an ordinance that prohibited “the solicitation of or for work on any street or highways, public area, or non-residential parking areas in the city of Pomona (Tresaugue, 1997).” The ordinance proposed to fine day laborers $1,000 and incarcerate them for up to six months in jail.

When the ordinance was passed, I happened to have a group of students, as part of a class called “Restructuring Communities,” working with various community activists to research day laborers. To protest the city ordinance, we worked with these activists to organize the day laborers at various street corners and to pack city hall. Although the city officials defended their actions by claiming that all day laborers were undocumented, the students were able to present evidence (from their research) that permanent residents also made up a portion of those who solicited work on the street corners.
When the city officials could not present any other alternative except for fining and jailing day laborers, the student researchers visited models of day labor centers organized by the Coalition for Humane Immigration Rights of Los Angeles.

With the help of this research, a funding proposal was written and a non-profit organization, the Pomona Economic Opportunity Center, was formed. Subsequently, the city council allocated $50,000 to this non-profit organization for the purpose of developing a day labor center. They also appointed a board of directors that included city commission members and representatives from the community.

Because of the involvement by our class, I was appointed to the board and so were various students. Fabian Nunez, also a student at the time (but now a noted union organizer and elected assemblyman), was elected as President of the board.

From the very beginning, two distinct philosophies emerged on the board. One view, backed by some city officials and consultants from a national hardware supply company, supported the ordinance and proposed using the police to get day laborers off the streets and into the center. Another view, supported by myself, Fabian Nunez, the students, the day laborers, and a community activist lawyer advocated against the ordinance while supporting the development of a day labor center. Rather than relying on the police to force the day laborers into the center, we proposed making the center a place that could help empower the workers through the establishment of employment training
programs, language classes, health referral networks, immigration rights counseling, and bi-weekly organizational meetings.

Presently, the students are not only continuing with their research, but they are implementing various projects to empower the day laborers. In addition to holding language and computer classes every morning, the students have been instrumental in ensuring worker representation on the organization’s board. Rather than allowing city officials or consultants to control the decision-making process, we have organized bi-weekly meetings to build the “voice” of the workers in running the center. As a result, the day laborers recently elected a director from their own ranks.

In response to the city council’s decision to minimally fund the day labor center in the future, we have utilized surveys, questionnaires, and focus groups to establish the amount of resources that the workers have and how they can be maximized. Our collaborative research with the workers has resulted in the writing of various grant proposals to area foundations. One grant, in addition to helping pay the rent for the center, has allowed us to develop a health referral program for the day laborers and their families. Another funded grant has helped in expanding language, computer, and job training programs.

Moving Beyond “Charity” Models

The examples presented in this paper have the commonality of using critical pedagogy, participatory action research, and service learning as a means of bringing students and faculty together with community-based organizations to work on common
issues and to create social change. These collaborative efforts are examples of policy-making models that go beyond charity and project models that primarily depend on “experts” to provide services through top-down approaches. They are distinguishable as models of social change that “seek to get at the root causes of problems, and focus directly or indirectly on politically empowering the powerless (Morton, 1995).” At the same time, these participatory action learning and research models require the faculty and students to immerse themselves alongside community participants, to collectively develop theories and strategies, and to achieve common outcomes.

An essential component of this style of learning and research is its commitment to promote an equal relationship between the interests of the academicians and the community participants. In working to move beyond the traditional models of gathering research from the outside for their own interests, participating students and faculty collaborate to “intentionally promote social learning processes that can develop the organizational, analytical, and communication skills of local leaders and their community-based organizations (Reardon, 1998).”

As part of this commitment, it is essential for faculty members to make a long-term commitment to the sites and communities that they have placed their students in. Although students can only make a commitment for a semester or until graduation, faculty participants are in a better position to sustain campus-community partnerships.
An example of this type of community-based partnering is the Center for California Cultural and Social Issues that was created in 1999 at Pitzer College. This center, in addition to supporting research and education projects, has developed a number of core partnerships that, at the minimum requires a faculty member to make a four-year commitment to a community-based organization.

As these long-term campus-community partnerships are developed, students and faculty can become a political force in their communities. They no longer have to be placed in the role of travelers passing by but can see themselves as participants with a stake in the decisions being made.

Academicians have had a tendency to "parachute" into a community or workplace for their own research interests without developing the kind of long-term relationship and collaboration that it takes to create concrete change.

Finally, with the participatory style of learning and research promoted here, it is important to define the meaning of "community." The community, as a whole, is made up of many competing interests. Those who are corporate growers, developers, and polluters call themselves part of the "community" although their profit-making interests often place them in conflict with "quality of life" initiatives in the community. The "community" referred to in this article is a geographical, political, and spiritual place that is very diverse. This place has different levels of stratification, power relations, backgrounds, and ideologies. The communities discussed in this
article are communities that are facing countless inequalities or that are trying to improve their quality of life. A particularity of the research and learning described here focuses on the sources of inequalities that these communities face and what can be done about them. The dominant understanding of inequality has a tendency to blame the "individual" for his/her "inadequacies." At the same time, there are other theories and explanations that focus on the historical and systemic foundations of inequality. The practices described in this paper stand with the latter. They challenge students and faculty to find common grounds of collaboration with community institutions, unions, organizations, and neighborhood leaders to invoke social consciousness and long-term structural change.

Although it is considered outside the "objective" mainstream of social science, the use of critical and participatory action research, teaching, and learning is gaining in acceptance (Maurasse, 2001, Nyden, Figert, Shibly, and Burrows, 1997; Greenwood and Levin, 1998; Richardson, 1990).

This type of participation takes the academic beyond the traditional bounds of "community service" to the level where students and faculty join community participants in using research, teaching, and learning to bring about fundamental social change. Jim Thomas, although focusing primarily focusing on ethnographic action research and learning, summarizes the differences between those who advance a traditional style of learning and those who are working to create social change: "Conventional ethnographers study culture for the purpose of
describing it; critical ethnographers do so to change it. Conventional ethnographers recognize the impossibility, even undesirability, of research free of normative and other biases, but believe that these biases are to be repressed. Critical ethnographers instead celebrate their normative and political position as a means of invoking social consciousness and societal change (Thomas, 1993).

CONCLUSION

The use of participatory research, teaching, and learning demonstrated herein, provides a viable alternative to the traditional "banking concept" of knowledge and advances a classroom pedagogy that: connects abstract theoretical concepts to lived experience and community engagement; provides a meaningful and practical means for advancing positive social relations by building bridges between students, faculty, and community participants from diverse backgrounds; and moves beyond top-down charity and project development models to those based on collaborative social change creation.

FOOTNOTES

1 At the time I began living in the city with my family, the city had received the national designation of being an "All-America City," reflecting its volunteer and innovative programs in dealing with new Chinese immigrants. Concurrently, an organized
backlash against the unbridled growth policies of the city council had also begun. A primary target of the "no-growth" movement came to focus on the city’s growing Chinese population. Up until 1960, Monterey Park’s population had consisted of 85 percent Anglo, 3 percent Asian, and 12 percent Latino. By the 1990 census, the Anglo population had dropped to 11.7 percent, while the Asian Pacific population had grown to 56 percent and Latinos to 31.3 percent. In the preliminary 2000 census, these rapid changes have continued with Anglo numbers decreasing to 8.2%, Latinos to 26% and the Asian Pacific population increasing to 63.7% (U. S. Census).

School officials and District level administrators had vehemently denied that the source of the student conflicts was based on ethnic/racial tensions. One school principal blamed the fighting between ethnic groups on "machismo" while another explained to the press that it was the "hormones" of the teenagers that were responsible for the conflicts.

For New Social Movement Theory, I used selected readings from Michael Buroway’s (ed.) Ethnography Unbound and Global Ethnography; and New Social Movements: From Ideology to Identity, edited by Enrique Larana, Hank Johnston, and Joseph R. Gusfield.

Brother Pete developed a close relationship with Pitzer students during an Alternative Spring Break in 1995 when they worked together in planting eighty rose cuttings at Chavez's gravesite. Upon learning that Brother Pete had terminal cancer, the students invited him to speak on the campus and to help in the negotiations with the Marriott Corporation.

The city of Pomona, Located 30 miles East of Los Angeles and with a population of 149,473, is a very diverse community with 64.5% Latinos, 17% White, 9.3% African American, and 7.2% Asian Pacific Islander, and .3% American Indian (U. S. Census, 2000).

I had already begun to write this paper when I began to collaborate with two of these students (now alumni), Suzanne Foster and Silvia Rodriguez, on a much more comprehensive study of this topic for an anthology. The article, “Organizing Immigrant Workers: Action Research and Strategies in the Pomona Day Labor Center,” will be published in a book edited by Enrique and Gilda Ochoa.

Six students wrote their senior theses related to the day labor center while others made presentations at the National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies (NACCS), the American Sociological Association, The American Association of Higher Education, and the Pitzer College Undergraduate Research Conference.

In its three years of operation, the CCCSI has given over 100 awards to students, faculty, and members of the community (that have included community-based summer projects and internships, academic-year course enhancement and senior year projects, and urban and community fellowships). In this relationship, the goal is to advance the empowerment of the
campus participants as well as the community participants—
together—and to build the utmost capacity of both.

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