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CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
IN URBAN AREAS

Canberra 14 - 18 October 1974

Report

by

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AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY
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INTRODUCTION

The seminar 'Crime and Delinquency in Urban Areas' was held at the Institute premises, Phillip, A.C.T. from 14 to 18 October 1974. The seminar had the benefit of a bibliography (which is to be published separately, at a later date), charts of urban areas showing crime density were available, and an introductory paper by Mr N. Kerkin on 'Town Planning and Crime Prevention'.

Appendix I contains a list of consultants and experts who attended the seminar. The participants of the five workshops are shown in Appendix II. Each of these workshops had its own leader and rapporteur.

The proceedings were introduced by an address on 'Defensible Space in Australian Urban Areas' by the Institute's Assistant Director (Training and Information), Mr H.G. Weir, followed by a delineation of the subject matter of the seminar by Professor P. Scott of the University of Tasmania entitled 'Crime and the Urban Community: Sickness or Symbiosis?'. This paper was designed to set the pattern for the seminar and to promote debate in relevant areas requiring exploration and discussion. Professor Scott pointed out that it was necessary to bridge the gulf between many spheres of knowledge appertaining to the question of crime in urban areas. Extreme views, either of pessimism or of optimism, should be avoided and the polarities of proposed solutions also presented difficulties. He thought that one should not discount, in assessing criminality in urban areas, the policies of the police from time to time, the impact of national events and the factor of increasing affluence.

As a preface to the work done in the workshops, four panel discussions were held, under the chairmanship of Professor Scott, which discussed the following topics:

- (a) 'The Relationship Between Urbanisation and Crime Patterns: What Do We Know?'
- (b) 'Community Relations & Law Enforcement - A New Initiative'
- (c) 'Is Society Delinquent?'
- (d) 'How Do We Plan A Low-Crime Social Environment?'

These panel discussions set the direction of the debates that followed in the five workshops.

Each workshop selected its own manner of proceeding and topics of debate and presented reports of the work done on Tuesday 15 October and Wednesday 16 October, together with a final report from each workshop by way of resumé.

The workshops concluded their tasks by formulating resolutions, which were then subjected to a filter process by a steering committee composed of workshop leaders and rapporteurs. From this filter process, seven resolutions were selected for submission to the plenary meeting of participants held on the fourth and fifth days of the seminar, namely Thursday 17 and Friday 18 October respectively. In the course of the debates in the plenary session, seven resolutions as selected by the steering committee were subjected to amendments. The final form of the resolutions are set out in Appendix III. Appendix IV sets out the programme of the seminar.

THE WORKSHOP PROCEEDINGS

The debates and the reports of the five workshops reflected the extensive range of a complex seminar topic. The width of the concept of 'crime', the difficulty of defining 'an urban area' and the complex concept of urban growth presented the five workshops with a very wide terrain for consideration. The formidable literature on the subject illustrated in the bibliography and the wealth of statistical information presented the workshops with a difficult task in getting to grips with a topic as wide as it is complex.

The workshops reflected the mounting awareness, interest and concern on the part of governmental officials, voluntary organisations and many kinds of experts, at the growth of juvenile delinquency in urban areas corresponding with the ever expanding process of urbanisation in Australia. The workshops also reflected the contemporary anxiety to find some remedial action as soon as possible to meet one of the major difficulties of our society and of our time.

In spite of the formidable amount of literature, statistical data and specialist writings, it was apparent that much crucial data relating to crime density, delinquent areas, patterns of criminality and patterns of criminals, as well as criminogenic factors in urban areas, are still missing. In particular, accepted causes of criminal and delinquent conduct are still not available; the causation of crime still eludes criminologists, sociologists, psychologists, governmental agencies and social welfare organisations.

The workshops concentrated on the experience gained by government officials and the police, welfare organisations and social workers, and avoided, in the main, attempts to analyse basic concepts such as 'crime', 'delinquency', and 'urban growth'.

It was generally considered that contemporary analysis indicates that there are discernible delinquent areas, urban in nature, both in old town and inner city areas and in the new urban developments such as housing estates. There is a consensus that in urban areas:

- (a) the bulk of the crimes committed and reported are directed against property
- (b) such crimes are mainly committed by male juveniles with a descending average age
- (c) that juvenile delinquency is expanding among female juveniles
- (d) that the urban areas of marked crime density can normally be identified with low standard socio-economic conditions
- (e) that the new housing areas, or housing estates, have their own crime problems, but that the pattern of criminality is different from those prevailing in low standard socio-economic conditions

At the same time the workshops accepted that the causes of crime cannot be laid entirely at the door of poor socio-economic conditions, although such conditions both generate and stimulate juvenile and other delinquency.

The workshops were of the view that criminal behaviour has not yet been attributable to established and defined psychological causes.

The topics discussed by the workshops ranged considerably wider than those indicated in the seven selected resolutions of the seminar set out in Appendix III. This wide area of debate is a reflection of the numerous variables that must be taken into account in seeking to establish the conditions that stimulate, if they do not generate, crime and delinquency in urban areas.

One group considered that the topic of school truancy in urban areas must be closely studied, both as to its causes and effects, because truancy was thought to be an 'early warning' of juvenile delinquency symptoms.

Associated with this view was that children with marked defective capacities to communicate, even on the simplest matters such as social exchange and telling the time, are also part of the 'early warning' system of future delinquent behaviour from such children.

This group also considered that the avenues of communication between all levels of officialdom and the 'consumer' citizen, particularly in the areas of social welfare and assistance, were in need of considerable improvement. It was pointed out that crucial advice and assistance is needed to prevent or reduce the commission of crime and delinquency, and that all too frequently the communication was blocked or came too late and failed to take account of 'early warnings'.

The workshops also pointed out that there was considerable need for education in regard to the use of leisure time by juveniles. Defective use of leisure was frequently the doorway to delinquency in that those with an inferior education and those not capable of resisting stress had no defensive measures in the form of effective uses of leisure.

This attitude corresponded with the view of writers that criminal behaviour is part of a sub-cultural and often inheritable pattern within families. Hence improved education standards, including education for leisure in urban areas with poor socio-economic conditions, was of vital importance. In the raising of educational standards in these areas, the task should not be confined to teachers but should also involve agencies such as social workers, and the parents themselves.

The workshops also expressed the view that society is itself in part to blame for the delinquency within it, both in failing to prevent an unfavourable environment in social and economic terms and, on the positive side, to establish an environment that experience shows is not congenial to the growth of delinquency.

Another suggestion from the workshops was that any domestic 'human rights' system of law introduced in Australia should find an express place for patterns of conduct that at present stand condemned under the penal law, but belong more properly to the moral area and are opposed to the moral standards of the majority; the so-called 'victimless crimes'. This was a plea for minority group activities, particularly among juveniles, that should be allowed within the law if confined to specific areas not likely to disturb the majority.

The workshops also proposed that there should be removal of the permanent

stigma of conviction of a criminal offence as one of the means of rehabilitation of the delinquent. This was required particularly to avoid hardship in the employment market, to remove a normal barrier to obtaining of credit facilities and to inhibit social ostracism. These questions were particularly relevant in urban areas. The analogy of the recent United Kingdom *Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, 1974* was urged as a precedent for consideration in the State Legislatures.

There was also apparent in the reports of the workshops the view that law is, as sociologists point out, only one means of social control, although it is an indispensable one. If society experiences the pattern and scale of delinquency that it deserves, then public participation in crime prevention and in rehabilitation is required. There was a feeling that the handling of criminals, and particularly of juvenile delinquents, should be a matter in which the community was more actively engaged, and particularly by the parents of juvenile delinquents.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE WORKSHOPS

It was accepted at the outset by the workshops that the removal of criminality from urban areas is an impossible ambition. The most that could be hoped for is reduction of criminality in such areas, particularly crimes committed by male juveniles in the under-privileged urban areas.

Expanding urbanisation is today carried out within a planning framework. The concern of the workshops was that, in the urban planning process, insufficient account is taken of a diversity of relevant interests, also, the planning process is too closely confined to architectural and physical considerations to the detriment of social and behavioural considerations. It was admitted that, as has been pointed out by Oscar Newman in his book *Defensible Space, Crime Prevention Through Urban Design, (1972)* certain types of architectural planning facilitated the activities of the criminal, for example by making supervision of public corridors in large high-rise blocks of flats virtually impossible.

Modern urban planning excludes in large measure public participation by the 'consumer'. The latter feels that the planners make their decisions behind closed doors, with the result that the 'consumers' have to adjust themselves to these decisions, without participation. This process tends to set up stress and disorientation in those for whose benefit the planning is ostensibly made.

The workshops also considered that in urban areas there is a marked failure in community relations between official bodies, for example the law enforcement agencies, and the citizen. This failure of community relations in a sub-standard environment stimulates crime and delinquency and impedes its detection. A large part of public indifference and failure to report criminality is seen to stem from poor community relations between law enforcement agencies and the citizens. Far from the citizen assisting the law enforcement agencies in alerting them as to impending crime or aiding the police in detection of crime committed, there is a wide scale apathy, even when crime is openly committed in the presence of members of the public.

A view strongly held by the workshops was that appropriately trained senior police officers should play a regular and active part in the urban planning

process and that such participation should not be limited to advice on traffic flow and control. In the urban planning process, steps can be taken to avoid creating conditions favourable to the commission of crimes, particularly crimes against property. Further, the question of open spaces, adequate street lighting and siting of banks, etc., are also matters on which urban planners should be guided and informed by a police participant in the planning process. It was understood by the workshops that up to date no such participation on a regular basis throughout the States and Territories is known.

The planning process should also take into account the views of social workers and welfare officers upon such matters as recreational facilities and social amenities. The consensus of the workshops was that the urban planning process should not be confined to urban planners taking into account solely physical and architectural factors, but should extend to behavioural considerations.

A strong suggestion emanating from the workshops was that State Governments should encourage organisations, such as trade unions and the more important professional associations, to assist as much as possible in programmes directed at the reduction of crime and delinquency in urban areas.

The question of stress difficulties as factors affecting urban crime had not in the view of the workshops, hitherto received appropriate attention. Poor urban environment conditions created stress for many families who are unable to respond adequately. Frequently, such families at stress risk proved the seminal points for juvenile delinquency. Such stress weaknesses were thought to be related in part to the educational system and to the quickening pace of youth development and premature career choice.

Stress situations were also a feature of the new housing estates. Although the socio-economic conditions were better than in the inner city areas, the removal into such housing estates created its own problems of isolation, disorientation, boredom and lack of community sense. These factors generated their own breed of delinquency and anti-social behaviour.

There was a strong feeling in the workshops that the 'consumer', that is the members of the public, should be encouraged to take part in the monitoring of the implementation of official decisions in urban planning and community relations. This public participation in the monitoring of policy execution would go far to break down certain aspects of bureaucracy which were distasteful to citizens and accounted for their lack of response in the social life of an urban area.

Urban planning should take into account such questions as the mobility of teaching staff and community officers. In many cases there was a failure to meet the expectations of those who had been moved from under-privileged urban areas to new housing estates. This generated a sense of discontent as well as disorientation, and was partly the cause of the apathy in regard to the public responsibility for crime detection and prevention.

The workshops also concluded that the present method of handling juvenile delinquents and child welfare cases was not adequate for our time. It placed too much emphasis on the judicial penal process. More might be done to dispose of juvenile delinquent cases by non-judicial processes in which there was participation by parents, social and welfare officers and members of the public. The accent should be upon something of the nature of an extended family council rather than a penal judicial proceeding.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The workshops assumed as latent premises for their discussions a number of factors to be favourable to urban delinquency:

- (a) poor socio-economic conditions
- (b) substantial increase in the number of juveniles in urban areas
- (c) the increasing number of children on the streets
- (d) the formation of gangs by juveniles
- (e) extended opportunity for 'property' offences

The workshops assumed and accepted that urban area development entails a certain rise in the crime rate in urban areas. In other words, growth cannot be disassociated entirely from the growth in the crime rate.

The workshops assumed that urbanisation means social, economic and psychological change at an ever increasing pace. These developments have not yet been met with adequate control, either by official or non-official agencies, and much could be done to bridge the gap by a monitoring control system on the part of social workers, parents and members of the public.

The general feeling of the workshops was that urbanisation must be subjected to an improved planning process if crime is to be reduced. Planning should be an 'open' process with a wider participation of an extended range of participants. In particular, the question of juvenile delinquency has not yet been properly handled at any level. A combination of extended urban and social planning, with a wider participation in the process, together with an extended public participation in crime prevention, achieved primarily through improved community relations with official agencies, would do much to reduce the incidence of crime in urban areas.

Neither panic nor pessimism are adequate responses to the statistical display of delinquency in urban areas. There is a reasonable prospect that in spite of initial disorientation caused by re-housing in housing estates, given time and patience and remedial measures, these areas may settle down to a lower rate of crime incidence.

The workshops did not have time to consider the 'white collar' crime, although it was recognised that this is a phenomenon of urban life, particularly in the more privileged areas. Anxiety was felt that this type of crime will be disregarded to the peril of society. 'White collar' crime is more sophisticated, less reported, and frequently more harmful to society in its consequences than the large scale petty criminality against property on the part of juveniles in the inner city areas.

The deliberations of the workshops made clear that much further knowledge is needed by way of survey data and research before the true proportions of crime in urban areas can be established with that certainty which will enable the appropriate response in selected remedial action designed to reduce criminality. The elimination of criminality for the discernible future is not practical in urban areas. The present levels of criminality in urban areas should not be a cause for pessimism or 'instant' cure techniques. Short-term projects are not the answer. There is no one answer and there is no 'instant' answer. Patient study and cautious empirical experiment would

seem to be the better response to the present situation.

The situation may be summarised thus, in the view of one writer: 'While the precise aetiology of delinquency and crime must vary with each individual case, the broad conditions which generate and stimulate them are well known. It is the final eradication of such conditions which alone provide the only sure guarantee against the continued presence of anti-social behaviour which involves the community in expense which is not limited to the financial sphere.' (*The Criminal Area*, T. Morris, page 198.)

COLONEL G.I.A.D. DRAPER, O.B.E.
Reader in Law Studies
University of Sussex

WORKSHOP CONVENOR

PROJECT DIRECTOR

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 Australian Capital Territory

W.K. Nicholl Stipendiary Magistrate
 Australian Capital Territory

A.J. Strickland Strategy Division
 Department of Urban and Regional Development
 Australian Capital Territory

R.W. Whitrod Commissioner of Police
 Queensland

Workshop Group 1

- Workshop Leader: J. Noble, Regional Superintendent, Central Gippsland Region, Social Welfare Department, Victoria.
- Rapporteur: J. Fielding (Ms), Department of Sociology, School of General Studies, Australian National University, Australian Capital Territory.
- Participants: K.C. Bottomley, Vice Chairman, Sydney Panel, Australian Frontier Inc., New South Wales.
- J. Hayes (Mrs), Executive Officer, Council of Social Service of the Australian Capital Territory.
- M. Kelly (Miss), Probation and Parole Officer, Crown Law Department, Western Australia.
- N. Lozzi (Miss), Probation and Parole Officer, Department of Corrective Services, New South Wales.
- J.F. McConaghy, Lecturer, Police Academy, Queensland.
- E. Mudge, Detective Inspector, Company Fraud Squad, Police Headquarters, Victoria.
- W. Saalfeld (Mrs), Newcastle Community Development Group, Hunter Valley Research Foundation, New South Wales.
- T.M. Sharman, Guidance Officer, Education Department, Tasmania.
- A.V. Surmon, Director, Social Planning, Monarto Development Commission, South Australia.

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Workshop Group 2

- Workshop Leader: Dr E. Cunningham Dax, Coordinator in Community Health Services, Tasmania.
- Rapporteur: E. Watson (Mrs), Department of Sociology, School of General Studies, Australian National University, Australian Capital Territory.
- Participants: D.R. Jarvis, Chief of Field Division, Department of Youth and Community Services, New South Wales.
- T. Lawton, Director, Education and Welfare Group, Legislative Research Service, Department of the Parliamentary Library, Australian Capital Territory.

S. O'Connell (Fr), Assistant Parish Priest, Clifton Hill, Victoria.

M.F. Sawyer, Executive Minister, Congregational Union of South Australia, Post Graduate Student (Town Planning), South Australia.

M. van Huyssteen (Miss), Social Worker, Social Development Branch, Department of the Northern Territory.

G.J. Zerk, Principal Child Care Officer, Department of Children's Services, Queensland.

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Workshop Group 3

Workshop Leader: R.W. Whitrod, Commissioner of Police, Queensland.

Rapporteur: J. Vagg, Research Division, Australian Institute of Criminology, Australian Capital Territory.

Participants: T.G. Birtles, Principal Lecturer in Applied Geography, School of Liberal Studies, Canberra College of Advanced Education, Australian Capital Territory.

G.V. Bond, District Child Welfare Officer, Hobart Area, Social Welfare Department, Tasmania.

D.J. Cuthbertson, Probation and Parole Officer, Department of Corrective Services, New South Wales.

A. Freiberg, Research Officer, Australian Institute of Criminology, Australian Capital Territory.

J. Graham (Mrs), Research Officer, Social Planning Group, National Capital Development Commission, Australian Capital Territory.

R. Sanson-Fisher, Clinical Psychologist, Department for Community Welfare, Western Australia.

S.J. Stanton, Assistant Director, (Social Work), Department of Social Welfare, New Zealand.

E. Whitehead (Mrs), Research Officer, Catholic Church Education Office, South Australia.

D.B. Young, Town Planner, State Planning Authority, New South Wales.

* * * * *

Workshop Group 4

- Workshop Leader: J. McDonnell, Assistant Secretary, Social Development Branch, Department of the Northern Territory, Northern Territory.
- Rapporteur: J.D. Moody, Fisher, Australian Capital Territory.
- Participants: M.B. Challen, Director, Home Mission, Diocese of Perth, Anglican Church, Western Australia.
- B.V. Easteal (Mrs), Sociologist, Department of the Capital Territory, Australian Capital Territory.
- R. Francis, Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Latrobe University, Victoria.
- I.R. Rippon, Manager, General Insurance, Legal & General Assurance Ltd, Australian Capital Territory.
- E.S. Shea, Senior Architect, South Australian Housing Trust, South Australia.
- R.S. Skeates, Director, Planning and Development, Coordinator General's Department, Queensland.
- G. Smith, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Queensland.

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Workshop Group 5

- Workshop Leader: D.N. Hillard, Social Policy Consultant, Department for Community Welfare, Western Australia.
- Rapporteur: S. Ellis, Pearce, Australian Capital Territory.
- Participants: K.E. Bradshaw, Senior Probation Officer, Department of Justice, Queensland.
- B.J. Brinley, Probation and Parole Officer, and Community Development Officer, New South Wales.
- D. Brodeur, Principal Planning Officer, State Planning Office, Department of Environment and Conversation, South Australia.
- I.C. Broomby, Inspector, Australian Capital Territory Police, Australian Capital Territory.
- B. Buckley (Mrs), Research Associate, Commonwealth Commission of Enquiry into Poverty, New South Wales.
- R.L. Gardner, Research Officer, Melbourne and Metropolitan Board of Works, Victoria.

D. Ryder-Turner, Lecturer in Social Geography, Sturt
College of Advanced Education, South Australia.

A. Smith, Social Work Supervisor, Department of Correct-
ions, Western Australia.

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EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Australian Institute of Criminology
Report on Training Project

The numbering of this Series commenced with No. 6.

RESOLUTIONS

APPENDIX III

CONTROL PARTICIPATION

That the seminar recommends that all agencies of social control in urban areas give priority to the establishment of mechanisms to enable the active participation and involvement of citizens and client groups.

CARRIED

PERSONNEL EXCHANGE

That governments explore the feasibility of establishing personnel exchange systems between as varied and as many appropriate instrumentalities engaged in providing services to the community as can be induced to join such a scheme.

CARRIED

POLICE PARTICIPATION IN URBAN PLANNING

That active recognition be made of the need to have a senior police officer to participate with urban planning authorities to provide the opportunity for police experience of crime and delinquency problems to be utilised by urban planners.

CARRIED

SOCIAL BEHAVIOURAL FACTORS

That there be a national strategy to ensure that the governments at all levels and the various planning agencies devote greater attention to human and social behavioural factors in crime and delinquency prevention, than is at present given.

CARRIED

NEIGHBOURHOOD PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

That the emphasis on the prevention of delinquency be developed at the neighbourhood level and that law enforcement agencies place greater emphasis on community relations.

CARRIED

TRADE UNIONS AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

That the Australian and State Governments encourage trade unions, professional associations and other appropriate influential organisations further to assist in every way open to them, programmes of social concern which aim to reduce crime and delinquency, and to encourage training, employment and rehabilitation of known offenders.

CARRIED

EXTRA-JUDICIAL HANDLING OF JUVENILE DELINQUENTS

That existing Child Welfare Acts and Ordinances of all States and Territories be revised with a view to incorporating techniques that will remove juveniles from having to undergo the traumatic experience of being processed through the courts except in the case of serious offences.

CARRIED

	MON 14 OCT 74	TUE 15 OCT 74	WED 16 OCT 74	THUR 17 OCT 74	FRI 18 OCT 74
9.00 AM		MEETING: Consultants, Workshop Leaders and Rapporteurs	MEETING: Consultants, Workshop Leaders and Rapporteurs	MEETING: Consultants, Workshop Leaders and Rapporteurs	
10.00 AM		PAPER: Probation and Parole in the Community <i>Chairman:</i> Mr D. Biles <i>Speaker:</i> Mr D.J. Brinley	PANEL DISCUSSION: Is Society Delinquent? <i>Chairman:</i> Professor P. Scott Dr E. Cunningham Dax Mr N. Kerkin Mr D. Biles	PANEL DISCUSSION: How Do We Plan a Low-Crime Social Environment? <i>Chairman:</i> Professor P. Scott Mr W.K. Nicholl, S.M. Mrs A. Sands	PLENARY SESSION: Conclusions & Recommendations
11.00 AM					REPORTS: Workshop Leaders
12 NOON	MEETING: Consultants, Workshop Leaders and Rapporteurs	PANEL DISCUSSION: The Relationship Between Urbanisation and Crime Patterns: What Do We Know? <i>Chairman:</i> Professor P. Scott Mr T. Birtles Mr R. Whitrod Professor T. Brennan	WORKSHOPS	WORKSHOPS	CLOSING CEREMONY <i>Chairman:</i> Mr P.R. Loof <i>Seminar Report:</i> Professor P. Scott <i>Workshop Report:</i> Colonel G.I.A.D. Draper O.B.E.
1.00 PM					PRESENTATION OF CERTIFICATES The Hon. Mr Justice R.A. Blackburn
					SEMINAR CLOSURE: Mr H.G. Weir
	LUNCHEON	LUNCHEON	LUNCHEON	LUNCHEON	LUNCHEON
2.00 PM					
	WELCOME: Mr H.G. Weir				
	LIBRARY INTRODUCTION: Miss S. Blomfield				
3.00 PM				WORKSHOPS	
			WORKSHOPS		
4.00 PM	PAPER: Defensible Space In Australian Urban Areas <i>Speaker:</i> Mr H.G. Weir	WORKSHOPS		MEETING: Consultants, Workshop Leaders and Rapporteurs	
	PAPER: Crime and the Urban Community: Sickness or Symbiosis? <i>Speaker:</i> Professor P. Scott				
5.00 PM			FILM: <i>Who Killed Jenny Langby?</i>	PLENARY SESSION: Workshop Findings and Resolutions	
5.30 PM					
6.30 PM	RECEPTION J.V. Barry Memorial Library				
7.30 PM					
		PUBLIC MEETING: Community Relations & Law Enforcement - a New Initiative		COURSE DINNER	

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