Rapid Ethnographic Assessment in Urban Parks: A Case Study of Independence National Historical Park

Dana H. Taplin, Suzanne Scheld, and Setha M. Low

This article presents a case study of the use of rapid ethnographic assessment procedures (REAP) to study an urban heritage park and its relationships with some of the cultural groups living in that city. The literature on REAP and rapid assessment, and on applied ethnographic research on parks, is surveyed. The context of the study is discussed at length: Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia and its historic relationship to the city, the park's proposed improvements that necessitated the study, and the communities that were consulted. Emphasis is given to the difficulties involved in selecting, reaching, and fairly representing particular communities for study. The article reviews the different methods used in this case and how well they worked in relation to one another. The findings of the study are summarized, giving attention to how the various methods produced particular findings. The article concludes with some observations about the study's usefulness to park management in this case and on the value of such rapid ethnographic research as a basis for park planning and programming in general.

Key words: rapid ethnographic assessment, heritage park, historic preservation, Philadelphia

Park managers are continually planning for improvements to their parks. While it is not unusual for parks to conduct visitor counts and even survey public opinion on facilities and programs as part of the planning process, managers are less likely to see ethnography as a basis for decision making. Park managers tend to concentrate on the physical resource, valuing it as wildlife habitat, conservation land, or as a scenic or historic landscape. Improvements consequently are driven by perceived needs to improve biodiversity, stem erosion, protect scenic values, or restore historic structures. In our work on various urban parks, we have found that applied ethnographic research produces information of great utility in planning and policy making. Park ethnography can complement the opinion survey by uncovering the cultural ties between parks and local communities.

Dana H. Taplin is a doctoral candidate in environmental psychology; Suzanne Scheld is a doctoral candidate in anthropology; and Setha M. Low is a professor of environmental psychology and anthropology at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the National Park Service. The authors are members of the Public Space Research Group, a research team of doctoral students in anthropology and environmental psychology, directed by a member of the doctoral faculty, based at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Our research partners were the staff of Independence National Historical Park, other Park Service personnel, the Philadelphia city government, and community members who participated in the research as interviewees, focus group discussants, and expert consultants.

In bringing local communities into the decision making loop, the research process itself nurtures those ties. Ethnographic research also informs the planning process so that management decisions will resonate with user constituencies and avoid unwitting impacts on historic relationships between park lands and cultural groups.

This paper will discuss our experience in conducting applied research at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in the fall of 1994. It is a case study of the use of rapid ethnographic assessment procedures (REAP), an applied research methodology approved by the National Park Service. Although this case study concerns an existing national park, the REAP methodology can be employed to gather cultural information in planning for public spaces and monuments of all kinds, existing or proposed.

Like traditional ethnographic research, REAP is designed to illuminate significant cultural values and to draw out special meanings. It departs from traditional ethnography in attempting to produce such knowledge in a rapid time frame compatible with project scheduling commitments. REAP cannot fully represent communities, but it does identify issues and build bridges between a park and local communities. In this paper we discuss the challenges of applied research on a prominent urban park and review the strengths and weaknesses of REAP and its constituent research methods. We then suggest what can be learned from this case study about bringing a tourist-oriented heritage park into closer involvement with the everyday cultural practices of local communities.

Rapid Assessment and Applied Ethnographic Research

Rapid assessment methodologies have been adapted for research on parks in the United States from methods pioneered in developing nations. The idea of rapid assessment originated at about the same time in two separate fields of work: one in rural and agricultural development projects, the other in connection with public health programs and epidemiology. Rapid assessment concepts have been adapted to nonethnographic contexts as well, such as conservation biology (Abate 1992). Rapid assessment procedures (RAP), a term widely used in the health field, originated as a manual published in 1981 by Susan Scrimshaw and Elena Hurtado, which was first applied in Guatemala and later field-tested in 15 other countries (Macintyre 1995; Manderson 1997).

A term used in agricultural development is rapid rural appraisal (RRA), which originated in workshops held in Sussex, United Kingdom, in 1978 and 1979 (Beebe 1995; Manderson and Aaby 1992). At that time, development officials devised rapid appraisal methods to gather relevant social information in connection with rural development initiatives operating with limited time and resources. All rapid assessment methodologies belong within the rubric of applied research: as Kumar (1993) points out, the task is not to solve theoretical puzzles or generate theory but to reach more rational decision-making processes in real-life circumstances.

Rapid methods grew out of at least two problems: the need to collect and assimilate social and economic information in rapidly changing contexts, and the lack of enough anthropologists working in applied medical and health fields, especially in poor countries. A related problem is the length of time and cost required to train field researchers. In the health field, international agencies have worked to develop effective health-education and disease-control programs in third world countries, as well as accurate program evaluation systems. Recognizing that health occurs in a sociocultural context, they have sought research methodologies from anthropology that provide highly specific social and cultural information (Harris, Jerome, and Fawcett 1997; Manderson and Aaby 1992).

Secondary reasons for the rise of rapid methods include a service agency "culture" that relies on consultancies rather than employment of a permanent research staff and the realization among agency officials that community insiders have valuable access to settings and possess knowledge that may be helpful to program design (Manderson and Aaby 1992). Rapid assessment methods have been widely used internationally for programs dealing with diarrheal disease, nutrition, primary health care, acute respiratory infection, and epilepsy, and sponsored by such agencies as United States Agency for International Development, United Nations University, United Nations International Childrens Education Fund, and the World Health Organization (Harris, Jerome, and Fawcett 1997).

Within anthropology, rapid assessment methodologies are historically associated with action anthropology, a value-explicit approach that works to achieve self-determination and to foster the accumulation of power in local communities. Anthropologists such as Stephen Schensul saw a need for time-effective research techniques, arguing that theoretical elegance and justification back to the theoretical literature did not serve community goals. Schensul devised what he called "commando anthropology" in Chicago in 1973. In that instance, eleven separate research teams entered Chicago public schools at 11:00 A.M. to evaluate the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) programs then operating. The findings were used to support a suit filed with the Illinois Civil Rights Commission (Van Willigen 1993).

Like action anthropology, rapid assessment methods place considerable importance on including local people as part of the research team. The premises, preferences, and interests of the powerful parties in a situation, (e.g., investigators, governments, and donor agencies) determine how these parties construct reality and choose their actions. It therefore becomes important to everyone involved in a given situation to offset the biases of funders and investigators. Equally valuable is the discovery of indigenous knowledge held by small farmers, women, and the landless, among others (Kumar 1993; Schensul 1985). Anthropologists are involved in the action at hand but as an auxiliary to local community leadership, using their research skills to support the attainment of community goals (Van Willigen 1993).

Rapid assessments differ from traditional qualitative research in that more than one researcher is always involved in an often multidisciplinary team, research team interaction is critical to the methodology, and the results are produced much faster (Beebe 1995:42). The two basic methodological principles in rapid research are triangulation of techniques and iteration. Triangulation, or the use of multiple methods, "aims at maximizing the validity and reliability of data" (Manderson 1997:6). The semistructured interview, expert interview, and the community focus group are the characteristic elements of a triangulated methodology. Iteration refers to the constant reevaluation of findings as new data come in, with the implication that new research questions may be generated in light of such reevaluations (Harris, Jerome, and Fawcett 1997; Manderson 1997).

"Rapid assessments [choose] timely, focused, and qualitative information at the expense of 'scientific' sureness of results through strong probability sampling" (Manderson 1997:2). Critics of rapid methods focus on questions of external validity and reliability. Because the research participants are selected on a cluster basis or on other nonprobability criteria, the results are generally considered to be not valid for the total population (Kumar 1993; Manderson 1997). Rapid-methods data give a relatively accurate picture of the prevalence of a phenomenon, attitude, perception, or behavior pattern, but not its extent or pervasiveness (Kumar 1993).

Rapid methods are also held to pose problems with internal, or construct, validity—that is, giving variables or

behaviors the right names and assigning accurate meaning to observations (Harris, Jerome, and Fawcett 1997). In traditional ethnography, the years spent observing and living with research subjects tend to assure high construct validity, but rapid research can lead to misunderstandings about the phenomena observed. However, using triangulation techniques reduces this risk. Reliability—the ability to produce the same results repeatedly—is also at issue with rapid methods, where the difficulty is attributed to observer bias. The multidisciplinary nature of rapid research teams helps control observer bias (Harris, Jerome, and Fawcett 1997).

In North America, rapid methods have been applied to social impact assessments (in the United States, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act [NEPA]), and to community needs assessments (Crespi 1987; Liebow 1987). NEPA requires federal agencies to involve the public in decision-making processes. For park managers, conducting ethnographic research in relation to planning and programming decisions complies with NEPA and provides cultural information useful to operating, protecting, and conserving cultural resources (Mitchell 1987).

Ervin (1997) reported on a community needs assessment for Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, which took about six months in all, using a combination of six qualitative methods. The four-person research team worked under contract to the local United Way to rank the community's social service priorities. The resulting report ranked social service priorities, such as eliminating hunger and strengthening preventive services, and avoided making direct evaluations of social service providers. Still, some of the stakeholders in the project, dependent on United Way funding, were wary of cooperating with the research effort and were, in some cases, hostile to it.

Within the National Park Service (NPS), cultural resource management (CRM) is concerned with identifying the impact of federal and other development on archeological sites, historic buildings, and the like, and then managing the impact in various ways, as required by federal law (Van Willigen 1993:164). Cultural anthropologists working in CRM have more recently been applying ethnographic research to contemporary communities and adapting rapid assessment methods as one of several approaches to applied research. The agency's Applied Ethnography Program defines seven ethnographic research methodologies, among them rapid ethnographic assessment procedures (REAP) (NPS 2000). Each methodology is employed in one way or another to investigate and describe cultural relationships between particular local communities and park resources, sometimes to support nominations of lands and sites to the National Register of Historic Places (Joseph 1997). REAP is appropriate for project-driven applications because it provides a great deal of cultural information useful to planning purposes within a short time—generally, four months (NPS 2000; Liebow 1987). REAP's short time frame is a crucial advantage in the event of substantial proposed construction, which involves major commitments of funds, negotiation of political support, and many promises as to feasible and timely project development.

Cultural Resource Management Bulletin, an NPS publication, devoted an issue in 1987 to ethnographic research within the agency on contemporary communities. Although REAP is not addressed, several of the articles elucidate the agency's views on the utility of applied ethnography in general. Bean and Vane (1987) and Low (1987) corroborate Van Willigen's observation (1993) that funding for cultural research within the NPS is devoted primarily to historic and archeological concerns, rather than to the cultural relationships of present-day communities to park resources.

Howell's (1987) report on her experience in 1979 with the Big South Fork National Recreation Area in Tennessee is an example. In that project, researchers were able to convince a cooperating federal agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, to divert a small portion (\$50,000) of the project's cultural resources budget to ethnographic research, in the form of a folklife survey. Howell observes that history and archeology have long had important roles in cultural resource management and interpretation, but, until recently, little research was done to understand the lifeways of people living in and near national parks. Marlowe and Boyd (1987) allude to the rival "cultures" within NPS. We suppose too that park managers tend to see the lifeways of ordinary people as selfevident and to pride themselves on "knowing their people," and therefore do not readily see the need for ethnographic research.

The National Park Service first undertook ethnographic research in connection with Native American communities having long-standing associations with certain park lands. These lands and associated cultural resources are required by Native Americans or other local communities for their continued cultural identity and survival. NPS labels these lands "ethnographic resources," and the peoples associated with them "traditionally-" or "park-associated" peoples (Crespi 1987). In providing systematic data on local lifeways, applied ethnographic research is intended to enhance the relationships between park management and local communities whose histories and associations with park cultural resources are unknown or poorly understood (Bean and Vane 1987; Crespi 1987; Joseph 1997.)

NPS literature points to several benefits from ethnographic research. One is in conflict management: for example, when the local community opposed a new park designation, ethnographic knowledge helped management identify opportunities for compromise and potential mitigating measures (Wolf 1987). Another benefit involves community empowerment. Joseph (1997) stresses the collaborative nature of the applied ethnographic research done by NPS, where ordinary citizens and community leaders participate alongside elected officials, park managers, and the researchers. While the powerful constituencies in a community make their views known, ethnographic research can identify less visible groups and draw them into the decision-making process.

A third important benefit of ethnographic research is in finding ways to both present and represent the cultural heritage of local communities within a park's interpretive program. Despite its emphasis on the deeds of great white men, Independence National Historical Park has tried to represent the history of Philadelphia's African American community in its interpretive program. Such efforts have been controversial among park staff, some of whom feel that the stories of less famous people should not compete with the official focus on the founding of the nation (Blacoe, Toogood, and Brown 1997). But Minuteman National Historical Park, in Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts, has restored and preserved farming as a traditional cultural practice within the historic environment the park preserves and interprets. Information that may be uncovered only through ethnography, such as the gendered division of labor on family farms, becomes an important part of the park's interpretive message and is also helpful to effective management (Joseph 1997).

Manderson and Aaby (1997) point to an absence of health-related rapid assessment studies in the literature. As they see it, rapid assessments are done in support of program requirements, not as scientific research, and their frequent use in contracts and consultancies make them not the usual stuff of academic reporting. Applications of REAP are also not widely reported; however, in this paper we hope to illuminate the uses and achievements of one REAP case study.

Independence National Historical Park

Independence National Historical Park, in Center City Philadelphia, was officially established by an act of congress on July 4, 1956 to preserve and commemorate a number of public buildings and objects "of outstanding national significance" associated in public memory with the signing of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 (Blacoe, Toogood, and Brown 1997). Its stated mission is to "preserve [the area's] stories, buildings, and artifacts as a source of inspiration for visitors to learn more about the ideas and ideals that led to the American Revolution and the founding of the United States" (National Park Service 1995:3) The park's chief built attraction is Independence Hall, where the Declaration of Independence was signed. The park showcases the Liberty Bell, which once hung in the bell tower of Independence Hall and is remembered for ringing in celebration of the signing. Also preserved here are the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the Constitution of the United States (Blacoe, Toogood, and Brown 1997).

Independence National Historical Park occupies an area of continuous urban settlement since the founding of the city in 1682 (Figure 1). By 1950, the buildings now enshrined by the park were embedded within a dense fabric of buildings housing a mixture of commercial and industrial uses. The park was created by removing all the 19th and 20th century buildings within a three-block area (Greiff 1987). The idea was to open and frame attractive views of the historic buildings. Being able to capture attractive visual compositions in

the camera's eye is an essential touristic activity, and the park was designed to attract tourists. Such a weeding out, to make the preserved structures more visible, was the established practice in historic preservation, as exemplified by the work in Colonial Williamsburg in the 1920s and 1930s. The practice goes back at least as far as Baron Haussmann's removal of buildings around Notre Dame in Paris in the 19th century (Holleran 1998). The clearance left Independence Hall, Carpenters' Hall, the Second Bank of the United States, and similar buildings chosen for preservation, standing in a green, park-like setting.¹

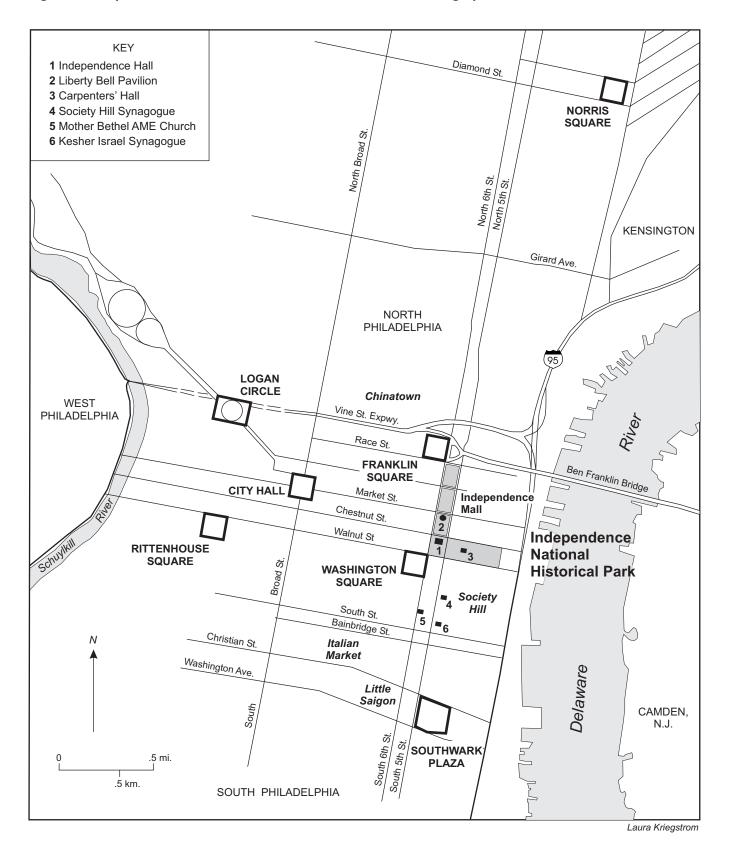
At the same time, the state and city governments undertook two redevelopment projects to complement the federal work on the park. One of these was Independence Mall, intended as a formal and monumental approach to Independence Hall. The state created the mall in 1967 by demolishing another three blocks of existing buildings extending northward from Independence Hall (Greiff 1987).

The buildings demolished for the park and the mall held banks, workplaces, shops, and offices, perhaps restaurants, bars, union halls, and other spaces that support and define everyday city life. The symbolism of the historic sites for local people had been embedded in their historically layered experience of everyday life in the buildings and streets of the neighborhood. Removal of the urban context disrupted many of the long-time associations of Philadelphia communities for this specific urban territory.

To the south of the park, the city undertook another urban renewal project that transformed a dilapidated neighborhood of mixed industrial, commercial, and residential uses into an upper-income residential area called Society Hill. This had been the area of black settlement in Philadelphia in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Society Hill redevelopment was intended to recapture the area's 18th century buildings for high-grade residential use and to reverse middle-class flight from the city. In the process, the remaining African American residents were essentially forced from their homes, which were then acquired and sold to wealthier people who could afford the stipulated restorations. The African American community was thus displaced from Center City.

Independence National Historical Park is the top tourist attraction in Philadelphia. The plazalike area along Chestnut Street in front of Independence Hall bustles with horse-drawn carriages and trolleylike tour buses serving the tourist trade. Sidewalk vendors sell fast food from carts. Lines form for the tours of Independence and Carpenters' Halls, and visitors crowd into the Liberty Bell pavilion. Visitation to the Liberty Bell alone in 1997 and 1998 was between 1.6 and 1.8 million people annually (Janofsky 1998). There are numerous walking tours, both by NPS rangers in their gray shirts and campaign hats, and by other guides in period regalia. Clutching guide books and cameras, people walk between Independence Hall and the visitor center on Third Street to the City Tavern, a living-history restaurant on Second Street, and to the many other historic sites and points of interest in and around the park.

Figure 1. Independence National Historical Park and Related Ethnographic Sites.



Philadelphians also visit the park, often to bring out-oftown guests here for the "full Philadelphia experience." Some come to visit the historic sites with their children; others visit the quieter lawns and gardens as couples. Many workers in the business blocks nearby take their lunches in the park in warmer weather.

The REAP was precipitated by plans advanced by Philadelphia civic leaders and the National Park Service to make several tourist-friendly changes to the park. These include moving the Liberty Bell from the pavilion on Independence Mall, where it has resided since moving out of Independence Hall for the Bicentennial celebrations in 1976, and establishing a new visitor center next to the Liberty Bell and Independence Hall. The \$30 million Gateway Visitor Center began construction in 2000 and should be finished in 2002 (Salisbury 2000). Both the Liberty Bell pavilion and Independence Mall were created—and are now being modified—in the service of manipulating the potent symbolism of Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell to serve various interests. The Park Service's interest is in properly enshrining these symbols; the City of Philadelphia's interest is in refurbishing its image to attract tourism and conventions.

Park officials and urban critics as well have considered neither pavilion nor mall to be satisfactory components of the park. Independence Hall is too small to visually anchor the vast space of the mall, which trivializes the building. The mall itself, its spaces articulated in abstract forms that relate poorly to the setting, has not become a well-used and loved public space.

The Liberty Bell pavilion achieved the goal of relocating the Liberty Bell to reduce wear and tear on Independence Hall. Sometimes compared to a bus station, the squat, angular pavilion has been criticized as an undignified, architecturally undistinguished setting for the bell. The pavilion was designed to place Independence Hall in the background of one's field of vision when viewing the bell. But from this vantage point along the axis of the mall, Independence Hall is visually overwhelmed by much larger buildings in the distance. The plan is to move the Liberty Bell a short distance so people viewing it will see Independence Hall against a background of sky (Rybczynski 1998).

Unlike Independence Mall, the park proper, from Independence Hall to the visitor center on Third Street, retains the historic intrablock pattern of streets and alleys as pedestrian ways. These historic passageways work with the surviving buildings and plantings to articulate a series of inviting, modestly scaled green spaces. Philadelphia residents and office workers use it as a green haven for quiet walks or relaxing on a bench or on the grass.

Identifying the Park-Associated Communities

The space the park now occupies was radically altered by the clearance and new construction undertaken in the 1950s to create the park and the mall and by the redevelopment of neighboring Society Hill. Thus it would be hard to say what "traditional association" remains between the park and local communities. Had a REAP or something like it been done before making changes to the space, the park might have been designed very differently. Of course, such investigations were not done in the 1950s. However, new associations between established communities and the park have formed in the intervening years. Some of the communities we consulted—the Vietnamese and the Puerto Ricans—have arrived in Philadelphia only since the park was created.

In this particular case, NPS officials had already decided which groups to study, based partly on the record of permit applications for use of park grounds for parades and other events. The "scope of work" issued by NPS identified five ethnic groups as salient to the neighborhood of Independence National Historical Park—African Americans, Italian Americans, Jews, Latinos, and Asian Americans. Other stakeholders, such as the city government, tourism and convention authorities, even vocal neighborhood groups in Society Hill, were already involved in the planning process. The REAP was planned to reach affected constituencies not yet heard from.

The research team had some prior knowledge of Philadelphia and learned more during early visits to the park. We suggested broadening the criteria for defining traditionally associated groups. Using factors such as religious affiliation, sexual orientation, gender, age, and occupation would open the REAP up to local communities with connections to the park who would not be heard if race and ethnicity were the only criteria. For example, we suggested consulting the gay and lesbian community, which seeks special permits for assembly and marches to associate their causes with the park's powerful symbols. Park managers decided that studying gays and lesbians in the park could jeopardize the privacy and safety of these visitors.

Criteria for selecting neighborhoods were: 1) proximity within walking or short driving distance from the park, so that residents could visit the park on a regular basis; 2) visible spatial and social integrity; and 3) culturally oriented stores, restaurants, religious organizations, and social services that reinforce cultural identities.

Although there is no Native American neighborhood near the park, American Indians might have some long-standing territorial association with lands in Center City Philadelphia or a symbolic association with the park's nationalist icons. The decision against including Indians seemed to rest on their absence from the scene as a geographically identifiable community.

There are Jewish communities at the city limits and in the suburbs, but there is none in or near Center City. Yet the Jewish community in Philadelphia dates from colonial times and there are Jewish landmarks and institutions in and near the park. Park managers agreed to include the Jewish community in the study.

The Italian American, Vietnamese, and Latino communities all have a residential presence near Center City, if not exactly in it. There has long been a sizeable Italian American

neighborhood in South Philadelphia. It features the Italian Market, a colorful, chaotic, lively, and ramshackle collection of market stalls along South Ninth Street south of Bainbridge Street. St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi Church, nearby, is the traditional Italian American Catholic parish in Philadelphia. South of Washington Avenue, the Italian market terminates with two gleaming, enamel-sided and neon-lit cheese steak and hoagie places, at least one of which, Pat's, is well-known even outside Philadelphia. These are sociable gathering places for neighborhood residents and visitors alike who come to partake of the characteristic South Philadelphia food and atmosphere. The surrounding area of small brick rowhouses built closely on narrow streets, retains a substantial Italian American population, which is now declining as other groups, notably Vietnamese immigrants, move in.

Although Philadelphia's Chinatown is close to the park, the Vietnamese community of "Little Saigon" was specified by the Park Service as the main Asian community for this study. Little Saigon, located eight blocks south of Independence National Historical Park along Eighth Street south of Christian Street, has grown within the Italian American section of South Philadelphia. Many of the market stalls in the Italian Market are now operated by Vietnamese merchants. Although the vicinity lacks parks or other organized public spaces where community members can visibly congregate, there are many signs of a developing ethnic community. There are a variety of multipurpose stores and restaurants on the ground floors of the narrow three- and four-story brick rowhouses. The signs in store windows and on awnings are predominately in Vietnamese. A travel agency, beauty salon, fruit store, and pharmacy appear to be the nexus for community information, which is conveyed through conversation and available cultural publications. Masses are offered in Vietnamese at nearby St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Church.

Norris Square, located in a deteriorating neighborhood a short bus or subway ride north of Independence Hall, is an important center of Puerto Rican culture within the city. The square is organized in much the same way as a Latin American urban center: a flat open plaza filled with trees, grass, and benches along concrete walkways. Although the square is in poor physical condition, one nevertheless finds older people resting on the benches, mothers crossing with young children, and youths congregating at the corners. Surrounding the plaza are the institutions of major social importance to the community: two churches, a Catholic school, a senior center, community centers, and several residences flank each edge of the plaza. Several of the local community agencies are located in simple three-story rowhouses nearby.

African American settlement is widespread in Philadelphia, but the community's historic core along South Street and in Society Hill has dispersed. We chose the nearest surviving African American neighborhood, located in South Philadelphia around the Southwark Plaza public housing project, which has been torn down and redeveloped since our research in 1994-1995. To broaden our African American community sample beyond the largely poor residents of Southwark, we interviewed members of the Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, "Mother Bethel," a famous and historic parish that draws its congregation from all over the city.

Based on these criteria and the choices made by the National Park Service, we identified the following communities as our collaborators in this study:

- African Americans, represented by the Southwark Plaza neighborhood in South Philadelphia and the congregations of the Mother Bethel Church in Society Hill and the Nazareth Baptist Church in South Philadelphia;
- Asian Americans, represented by the Little Saigon neighborhood and the congregation of St. Thomas Aquinas Church in South Philadelphia;
- Latinos, including Puerto Ricans who participate in the Puerto Rican Day Parade, represented by the Norris Square neighborhood in North Philadelphia;
- Italian Americans, represented by the Italian Market neighborhood and the congregation of St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi Church in South Philadelphia;
- Jews as a "community of interest," rather than a spatially integrated area, and represented by two synagogues in Society Hill (the Society Hill and Kesher Israel Synagogues).

Methods

The REAP began with extensive interviews with park officials who already knew a lot about who uses the park, what they do there, and what they think about it. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, transect walks, and behavior mapping were the methods used to collect data from each cultural group. Table 1 summarizes the products and outcomes of the methods. In 36 days of fieldwork, about 135 people were consulted in individual interviews, transect walks, and focus groups.

The data were coded and then analyzed for content by cultural group and study question. All the places in and around the park having personal and cultural associations for our research participants were denoted on cultural resource maps. One map was prepared for each cultural group.

One of our goals was to involve and educate community members about the park planning process, as well as to learn their thoughts about the park. We considered our research participants as collaborators, rather than mere "subjects" to mine for data: persons whose decisions and actions make a difference to their community and to the park. We would listen to them, as researchers must, but we also shared information that could be of interest or use to them. At the conclusion of the interview people were given a form that could be mailed back to the park with written suggestions and comments on the park's future use. The researchers also had colorful maps and other park literature to distribute.

Table 1. Methods, Data, Duration, Product, and What Can Be Learned

Methods	Data	Duration	Product	What Can Be Learned
Transect walks	Transcribed interviews and consultant's map of site, fieldnotes	6 days	Description of site from community member's point of view	Community-centered understanding of the site; local meaning; identification of sacred places
Individual interviews	Interview sheets, fieldnotes	12 days	Description of responses of the cultural groups	Community responses and interest in the park
Expert interviews	In-depth interview, transcriptions	10 days	Description of responses of local institutions and community leaders	Community leaders' interest in park planning process
Focus groups	Fieldnotes and tape-recorded transcripts	6 days	Description of issues that emerge in small group discussion	Enables understanding of conflicts and disagreement within the cultural group
Behavior mapping	Time/space maps of sites, fieldnotes	2 days	Description of daily activities on sites	Identifies cultural activities on site

Transect Walks

A transect walk involves a walk through the site with a willing resident. With a map and tape recorder in hand, the researcher asks the participant to relate personal experiences of special places; special events; historical areas; culturally significant areas; favorite spots for resting, reading, or drinking; and trysting places. The walk takes between one and two hours. We sought one or two community members from each cultural group for transect walks, asking those who seemed interested in the research process to participate. They were compensated at the level of wage replacement plus travel.

Transect walks work best as a supplement to a broadbased data set, which, in this case, came from neighborhood street interviews. The transect walk provides a greater depth of information than individual interviews; however, it necessarily carries the particular individual's bias and must be checked for consistency with data obtained through the other methods. The transect walk participant has more time to consider and develop discussion of the site and its meanings than persons participating in the comparatively brief street interviews. The sights, sounds, and smells of being on-site provide a continual stimulus to the memory.

Transect walks, however, are much more difficult to organize than ordinary interviews since a participant has to be found who is willing to make a date to do the walk. We used professional tour guides for the African American and Jewish communities as a concession to the study's time limits because we were unable to find enough community members to do the walks. Although professional tour guides have

ample knowledge of the site, in at least one case the tour guide's talk seemed rote in comparison to nonprofessional participants.

Individual Interviews

On-the-street interviews with individuals out in the neighborhoods were the broadest source of data. They elicited the views of citizens who ranged from very interested to uninterested (but at least willing to talk.) These interviews followed the REAP interview schedule (Figure 2), prepared at the outset of the project with input from park management and some field testing. Interviews were completed in Spanish or English, depending on the preference of the interviewee. The interviewer had a map of the park available to note any site-specific recollection and to stimulate discussion. To save time, the researcher took notes rather than tape recording the interviews, but the participant's own words and phrases were preserved as much as possible. The handwritten notes were then transcribed into typewritten interview transcripts to be used for data analysis. Researchers who conducted interviews in Spanish translated them into English in the typewritten transcripts.

There was no formal procedure for selecting interview subjects—the researchers simply dropped themselves into various on-street and accessible off-street social settings and looked for willing participants. Many interviews took place on the sidewalk. Other settings varied from a grocery store, bus stop, or laundromat, to more formal settings such as a church office or a table at a restaurant. Researchers were identified by National Park Service photo identification cards. A

Figure 2. Reap Interview Schedule

Introduction: Hello. I am doing a brief survey for the National Park Service to learn what people think about and how they relate to Independence National Historical Park. May I talk to you for five minutes to find out what you think? Please feel free to answer only the questions that you want to. Your answers will be completely confidential. If you would like, I can send you the results when it comes out as a public document. Can I answer any questions? Thank you so much.

- Have you heard of Independence National Historical Park? (code: Park Knowledge) Probe—Liberty Bell? Independence Hall?
- Have you been to Independence National Historical Park? (code: Visitor experience) Probe—Liberty Bell, Independence Hall
- 3. Do you know about the general management planning process that is underway for the future of Independence National Historical Park? (code: Planning Knowledge)

What would be your concerns about possible changes made to Independence National Historical Park?

Probe about moving the Liberty Bell, changing the way you visit Independence Hall (freely or in lines)

- 4. Does Independence National Historical Park have any special meaning for you? (code: Meaning) Does Independence National Historical Park hold any special feeling for you?
- 5. Are there any aspects of your cultural history that are related to Independence National Historical Park? (code: Culture)
- 6. Are there any (historical) events that occur in the park that are related to your family, ethnic or cultural group? (code: Events) Do you participate in any of these events? Where do these activities occur?
- 7. What aspects of your culture and cultural history do you feel are the most important to convey to individuals and groups from other backgrounds that will help them to understand you better (code: Cultural Understanding)
- 8. What relevance does the Independence National Historical Park have for you in general? (code: Relevance)
- 9. What would you like to see happen at the park that currently does not happen?
 What kinds of exhibits, programs, cultural events, and activities would you like to see at the park? How could the community be involved in the development of these events? (code: Community Involvement)
- 10. If you don't mind my asking:

Where do you live?

How old are you?

What do you do for a living?

What do you consider your ethnicity? (code: Demographics)

11. Is there anything that I have not asked you that you think I should? (code: Other)

few people refused to be interviewed for reasons of time, interest, or language; but most of the persons approached were willing to talk about the park.

Each major ethnographic question was accompanied by a number of suggested follow-up questions or probes (see Figure 2). Depending on the answer to the original question, the researcher could use appropriate probes to stimulate further consideration and draw out more information. The demographic data sought in Question 10 were critical to analysis of the ethnographic data.

Most respondents had experience of the park which they recalled in response to the first two questions: "Have you heard of Independence National Historical Park?" and "Have

you been there?". Some older African American interviewees associated the park with pleasant memories, such as "I used to take my children there." One middle-aged woman remembered "a little bridge in the park" that she and her friends crawled underneath when she was about 15 years old. A 27-year-old Italian American woman said, "Oh yeah—around Fifth and Market. It's a big tourist attraction for out-of-towners." Yet she had passed through the park recently on her way to the Bourse (a popular food court): "It's very nice—it was at night, and it felt like stepping back into history." Some didn't recognize the park as such, only the landmarks in the general area: "Oh, you mean Independence Hall and the Betsy Ross House?" Some liked the park, especially the

area east of Independence Hall, which one woman thought "very pretty," adding that "the mall is the problem." Another said, "The park is beautiful now, and so much better than it used to be. They should work on making other parks in Philadelphia as beautiful." A 19-year-old woman visits the park because "I like the scenery, and it's a good place to think."

One of the goals of the interview was to find out what meanings the park holds for Philadelphians. Meanings can be uncovered by inquiring into related domains like cultural affinity (Question 5) or attendance at events and programs (Question 6). For example, one man remarked that his niece took wedding pictures in the park near Sixth and Walnut Streets. From that response we infer that the park has meaning as a place of beauty suitable for wedding pictures and not necessarily related to its mission of portraying national heritage.

We asked about meaning directly in Question 4 and found negative as well as positive meanings. For example, an African American man commented that the area had no meaning because "the area is for tourists. It is a white area, the intention is for white people to see the bell. It is not important for African Americans visiting, it's not for African Americans." Another said "most people who go there go to look at their own people. It's a showcase for white people." From such remarks we infer much about the social consequences of the kind of redevelopment that created the park and particularly Society Hill as privileged enclaves.

None of the groups felt the park represented their cultural group. Italian American cultural events focus spatially on the Italian American home turf. The Columbus Day parade, for example, follows Broad Street to the Columbus Statue in South Philadelphia, located "in the neighborhood, where it belongs," as one respondent put it. Most respondents saw no cultural association with the park territory and felt no need to have events there. One teenager, however, felt slighted that the Italians do not get to march down Chestnut Street as the Puerto Ricans do.

Italian Americans and Jews tended to think the park should not try to represent specific groups. As an Italian American woman said, "The park should be for everyone. There are too many nationalities [to emphasize individual ones]." Another said, "That causes problems—everything's so mixed. If you have too much of one, it displeases someone else." These comments point to the problem in representation of being inclusive but, at the same time, not offensive in appearing to focus unduly on other people's stories.

The question about relevance seemed almost to invite negative responses, especially among African and Italian Americans. An Italian American service station operator thought the park was too stiff: "I want to modernize it, okay? Maybe they should have a little log cabin, a hayride at Halloween, or Christmas scenery. What comes after the Liberty Bell? It stops there. Put something next to it, what comes next in history."

If REAP is a sort of confederation of research methods, the individual interview is the first among equals. There is no substitute for going out into the neighborhoods and asking people directly what they think. The other methods were in practice complementary to this single indispensable method.

Individual interviews are easier to obtain because they require much less of people's time. They can be typed up relatively quickly from handwritten notes; they do not involve the additional expense of transcription from tape recordings. Using open-ended interview questions (see Figure 2) allowed participants to answer the questions in their own words. We quoted their remarks extensively in preparing the content-analysis section of the report.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews were collected from people we thought had special expertise in the history and cultural significance of Independence National Historical Park, such as an African American historian, archivists, clergy of local churches and synagogues, heads of cultural organizations, community activists, and park officials. These individuals had expertise in the cultural and social history of their communities, and their insights provided context for interpreting the other field data.

Although Native Americans had not been included in the REAP, we did reach two expert consultants at the United American Indians of Delaware Valley, which has its offices on the edge of the park. These respondents, who were Lenapi and Nanticoke, pointed to the Peace Tree that had been ceremonially planted on Fourth and Chestnut Streets as a symbolic marker of Native Americans' attachment to the park. However, it lacks an explanatory plaque. They felt the park had done very little to remind the public that the park's land originally belonged to Leni Lenapi Indians. Further, they claimed there is no discussion of Ben Franklin's historical visit to the Iroquois communities and how he applied firsthand knowledge of indigenous populations' social organization to political projects. They objected to the denial of permits to the associations that organize the annual powwow. The groups have wanted to use park space for this cultural event, which draws visitors and participants from all corners of the United States. The park had denied permission allegedly because park rules stipulate that events must end by a specified time, whereas "a proper powwow goes on all night." They concluded, "If you can't use the park, it doesn't mean anything to you."

Focus Groups

We sought to set up focus groups within community organizations to discuss relationships between park and community. For ease of identification and access, we mainly selected religious institutions in the neighborhoods—churches and synagogues—but also active nonsectarian organizations. One focus group was organized by an interested community member who gathered people she knew in her own home.

Two of the churches requested letters explaining the purpose and procedure of a focus group.

The focus groups consisted of five to thirteen individuals. The discussions were conducted either in English, Spanish, or Vietnamese (or a combination of these languages), and directed by a facilitator, recorded by an assistant, and translated by a native speaker when necessary. Two of the four REAP researchers spoke Spanish, but neither was fully bilingual, so a translator was made available for the Spanish-speaking group. All the focus groups were tape-recorded and the proceedings transcribed.

As a method within a REAP research context, the focus group is difficult and time-consuming, both to organize and conduct, and expensive to transcribe. The lengthy transcript is much more time-consuming to code and analyze than the comparatively succinct transcripts from individual interviews. However, focus groups have the advantage of letting community members think together about the park and its significance to themselves and their cultural group.

Behavior Mapping

Behavior mapping consists of written fieldnotes and sketches that locate people and their activities at a given site in time and space. The method is most effective when used in specified park areas with a certain density of human activity to which the researcher can return repeatedly during the day (Sommer and Sommer 1986).

In this study, other research methods, such as interviews and transect walks, took priority. As a secondary method, behavior mapping would have had to be done during gaps in the time devoted to other methods. That was seldom possible: during transect walks, the researcher was walking and talking with the research participant and could not make behavioral notes and sketches at the same time. The individual interviews and focus groups were conducted out in the neighborhoods rather than within the park, so the fieldworkers were not there to observe behavior most of the time. Some behavior mapping was done in the course of visits to the park for meetings and archival research and when the interviewing was conducted within the park. Some behavior mapping was also done in the neighborhoods to support our ethnographic descriptions of those communities. The major mapping product in the REAP report was a series of cultural resource maps for each cultural group. The maps were based largely on information gathered from interviews, transect walks, and focus groups, rather than from behavior maps.

Behavior mapping could have played a greater role in a different study, one that included an ethnography of the park and its immediate context. In that case, behavior mapping, participant observation, and on-site interviews with park users would uncover differences among the user population in how the park is "read," used, and valued. For instance, we may assume that tourists come here for the museum-heritage park experience, as do some city residents. We might guess, however, that most residents do not visit as pilgrims or tourists

but come to enjoy the park's green spaces or to pass through it on their way around the city.

As it is, the REAP indicates what residents think of the park and why. An on-site study would show how the park is used and understood as part of the landscape of the city and people's routine experience of that landscape. These are not the same thing: the park is both a themed landscape of national icons and a place embedded in the cultural geography of Center City Philadelphia—itself a landscape replete with landmarks and icons and places of symbolic and historic value, of both personal and cultural significance. An ethnography of the park would show much that we do not know about the relationship of the park to its meaningful but gritty and unthemed urban context.

Historical and Archival Research

Historical and archival work accompanied all phases of the study. Interviews with local cultural historians, review of materials in the archives of Independence National Historical Park, literature reviews of contemporary analyses of the development of Society Hill, and an analysis of newspaper clippings regarding the relationship of the park to the local communities, all provided historical context for the study.

Major Findings

Many participants had thoughts about cultural representation. Some assimilation-minded Italian Americans and Jews we consulted were ambivalent about presenting themselves as distinct from other Americans. African Americans, on the other hand, saw a lack of their cultural representation in the park's official history. For some, the park represented the uneven distribution of public goods: "So much for them (tourists, white people) and so little for us (African Americans, working-class neighborhood residents.)" Asian Americans and Latinos favored a curatorial approach less focused on national independence that could integrate their stories into a more generalized representation of liberty and freedom in the American experience. Italian Americans, too, were interested in a more inclusive representation that did not end the story in 1782 or 1800 but continued up to the present.

Three of the cultural groups—African Americans, Latinos, and Jews—mentioned places they would like to see commemorated or markers they would like to see installed to bring attention to their cultural presence within the park boundaries. Many participants—particularly Latinos, African Americans, and Asians—saw the need for more programming for children and activities for families. Unlike the visual, pictorial experience tourists seek, residents in general were interested in the park's recreational potential: its sociable open spaces where one can get food, relax, sit on the grass—or as a place for civic and cultural celebrations. These residents wanted the park to be a more relaxed, fun, lively place. As a group, Latinos made the most use of the park for recreational purposes in their leisure time. Latinos were

particularly interested in developing the recreational potential of the park, but their sentiments were echoed by at least a few informants in each of the other cultural groups.

The REAP demonstrated that the park holds multiple values for Philadelphians, something either overlooked or taken for granted in the emphasis on accommodating visitors. "Visitors" is a problematic term because residents who use the park do not see themselves as visitors. Treating everyone as a visitor (read "tourist") neglects an important difference of territoriality. Residents incorporate the park into their home territory; visitors know they are visitors. To residents the park is symbolically and functionally part of the larger landscape of the city. They like being surrounded by familiar sights and places, follow their own rhythm in moving around the city, and enjoy a proprietary right of access. Those sensibilities are offended by crowds of tourists, the denial of free access to historic sites (that is, when not part of a tour), and perhaps by an overbearing emphasis on official interpretations. The more the park sets its landmarks off from the surrounding city through "museumification," thus reducing everyday contact with residents, the more the objects and places lose their meaning for residents.

Follow-up Since REAP

After six years, what effect has the REAP had on plans for Independence National Historical Park and on parkcommunity relations? One result is that the National Park Service authorized further research on Philadelphia communities and their relationships with the park. As part of this subsequent work, NPS distributed a questionnaire to all the people identified in the REAP as community informants. An Independence National Historical Park official said that she often uses the REAP report as a reference to back up arguments made in support of the park's position with regard to ethnic communities. Officially, the REAP report became an appendix to an environmental impact statement on the new General Management Plan. The REAP lent support to the idea of including Washington Square within the national park, a change already proposed at the time that has since gathered momentum. The same NPS official said that the new Liberty Bell enclosure will have a space in it for "public dissent." Park staff thought it important to include a specific space where dissenting groups could express themselves; she called this an "indirect impact" of the REAP. Free speech was not an issue the REAP addressed specifically, although numerous interviewees "dissented" from the park's patriotic messages (Doris Fanelli, personal communication, December 29, 1999). Until now the park has not had a specific space for expressing dissent.

One of the biggest changes afoot is the development of a new National Constitution Center within the park, to be located on the mall north of the new visitor center. The idea of a center was authorized in federal legislation in 1988. The center's guiding committee decided that public education should be an important part of the center's mission. The public education component will focus on the development of the constitution and the legal system that draws its authority from it since the time period illuminated by the park (Hine 1997). A number of the participants quoted in the REAP report felt the park's presentation of history could be somehow augmented to reflect the struggles for justice and freedom of the many peoples who have come to the United States since the American Revolution. The park now focuses on the original Constitution and the Bill of Rights. In focusing on amendments and other constitutional issues since the Bill of Rights, the new Constitution Center is in some part a response to the public concerns revealed in the REAP.

Having a public education component made the center a much larger construction project than would have been needed for an organization limited to research. A combination of private and public funds has been raised to fund the center's construction and operation. Architectural designs are being prepared by the noted firm of Pei, Cobb and Fried. The Constitution Center, and the new Liberty Bell pavilion and visitor center, will be built on the mall, of which the remaining open space is being redesigned by the Philadelphia landscape architect Laurie Olin as a green, landscaped park (Rybczynski 1998).

The REAP process is supposed to lay the groundwork for ongoing community involvement with NPS in the planning process. The authors recently contacted a number of the interviewees involved in the original research. We did not find any evidence from these conversations of active involvement in the planning process. One of our key informants, the pastor of the Mother Bethel Church, said that he received "reams" of correspondence from the park, including invitations to become involved—invitations which he did not pursue (Geoffrey Leath, Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church, personal communication, January 28, 2000). We can conclude that the park went at least so far as to apprise the community informants of the planning process.

The NPS staff at Independence were struck by some of the findings, at least by the degree of alienation some groups expressed. The staff seemed to want to reach out to the local communities to make the park inclusive enough to represent everyone, to appeal to resident and tourist alike. The park staff felt their work of interpreting the story of nationhood was advanced by the REAP study. The study delineated a number of ways the park's message, in filtering down to local residents through the various layers of personal experience and collective memory, had been construed as something intended chiefly for others. Park officials understood that and hoped to use the REAP to build bridges with these communities. Yet their interest and effort has not built bridges, at least in the sense of working cooperative relationships. We suppose the reason for this result is that bringing in the disaffected requires considerable unilateral effort on the agency's part. An angry community will make itself known through complaint and protest; a disaffected community is more likely to feel uninterested and be unresponsive to solicitations through the mail. It would take more time and effort than the park was prepared to give to go beyond mailings to bring these communities into the process.

Conclusion

REAP is very rapid ethnography: the work at Independence National Historical Park had to be delivered in about three months, leaving only a few weeks for fieldwork. With such haste there are inevitable concerns about the representativeness of the data collected. There is some danger in stereotyping cultural groups from too few contacts. The researchers can get only a superficial understanding of the communities studied. Yet there is value in having relatively quick qualitative results that are "vaguely right"—accurate enough to be used for decisions about additional research or preliminary decisions for the design and implementation of applied activities (Beebe 1995:49).

Our experience confirms Beebe's (1995) main methodological observations about rapid assessments: the necessity of teamwork, triangulation of research methods, and an iterative process of data interpretation. REAP uncovers a great deal of useful information in a short time; it provides a costeffective means of complying with the National Environmental Policy Act and other federal laws; and it makes an excellent starting point for enlisting community support and involvement in park operations. This REAP revealed some of the patterns of alienation and disaffection, as well as attachment, between the park and local communities. It gathered enough information to make useful suggestions for ameliorating some of these conflicts.

A challenge in such hasty work is to do more than repeat back to park managers what they already know—even though it may be useful to have such information based in empirical data and presented in an organized, systematic fashion. In this case, park managers, who deal largely with a seemingly undifferentiated population of tourist visitors, learned much they did not already know about local cultural systems. If managers had at least some idea of local residents' complaints and wondered why more did not visit, the REAP put the disaffection into historical and social context. We have a much better idea of why the park seems foreign to African and Italian Americans, in particular.

REAP must be undertaken in cognizance of the issues of validity and reliability that surround rapid assessment methods. The results cannot be taken to represent everyone, yet the methods produce valid ethnographic data. This REAP succeeded in finding and identifying some major patterns of cultural association and dissociation. The triangulation of methods played an important role in substantiating the data because the different methods produced generally consistent findings, which allowed inconsistent data to be properly interpreted.

Finally, the REAP made the case that contested urban space was as much a basis of cultural assocation as the park's nationalist icons. The removal of the African American community from the park's environs through urban renewal and

redevelopment is a necessary basis for understanding that community's present disaffection with the park. The Latino community's warmer relationship with the park is conditioned by the route of the Puerto Rican parade down Chestnut Street. The space the park occupies—who gets to use it and whose identity is reflected in it—is as symbolic for local people as Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell.

Notes

¹Carpenters' Hall was built in 1770 as the home of the Carpenters' Company, a builders' guild that dominated the 18th century building trades in Philadelphia. The First Continental Congress met in Carpenters' Hall in 1774 (Foundation for Architecture 1984). The Second Bank of the United States, built in 1824, has significance mostly as an architectural landmark; it was a prototype for the Greek Revival architectural style that swept the United States in the 1830s and 1840s. The architect was William Strickland (Foundation for Architecture 1984).

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