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Urban Transformation of Khedive's Cairo: A Study of Urban and Society Changes in One of the Oldest Districts in Monarchic Cairo

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Abstract. In recent years, the Arab world, especially Egypt have witnessed several political transitions, and that experienced its influence on several attributes in the Egyptian community. Several changes were clear in several fields; the social life, the media, and the culture of the Egyptian society. Thus, those transitions had their own reflections on the use of entire spaces, which made the place interchangeable with the culture of the contemporary community, who had various needs and requirements. The Research illustrates these political transitions in a certain community and the reflection of those evolutions on the culture of the inhabitants and therefore on the entire use of space. Therefore, the research monitors one of the maven spaces in Cairo which lived from the age of the monarchic era till the present time, and was influenced by the revolutions, and the variables occurred to the community. Consequently, the main objectives of the research are, monitoring and tracking changes in the structure and characteristics of communities (community and individuals, urban and cultural context, urban production) in some of the oldest urban ranges in Cairo. moreover, illustrating the social, cultural, political and economic changes and their reflection on the physical and non-physical aspects, like the social and cultural aspects, throughout the twentieth century in general and in recent decades (and even the current situation) in particular. The chosen case study space is the *Falaky* space near *Abdeen Palace* in the heart of the monarchic Cairo, which is named by Egyptians "*West El Balad*". The space is analyzed and the changes are monitored to find conclusions.

1. Introduction

Egypt has witnessed several as well as major changes during the past century as a result of political and economic events that had a certain impact on social and cultural life. Two distinct periods of the past century have radically changed their attitudes and results. The first period is described as the era of Khedive Ismail, which extends from the era of Ismail until the revolution of 1952, which printed this period, is a policy of Westernization, which intensified in the era of Ismail and lasted until the stage before the revolution. And lasted until the stage before the revolution.

The revolution of 1952- a political event in Egypt- had a great impact on social and cultural life in Egypt. The political and economic trends were modified during Sadat's era in the 1970s and early 1980s, resulting in changes in the social and cultural aspects of Egyptian society. Consequently, was the era of President Mubarak and was an extension of the policy of capitalism, which had an impact on the structure of urban place. The study examines the area of *Abdeen* and records the cultural and social changes and their impact on the physical changes of the place. Thus, the major objectives of the



research are, Monitoring the social, cultural, political and economic transformations and their impact on the physical and non-physical aspects like the social and cultural aspects throughout the 20th century and recent decades.

2. The methodology

The study’s methodology is to trace the relationship between the major transformations and the changes in the structures and features of the impaired society, so the researchers used the inductive and analytical methods, through using the theoretical background and the field study to within two main pillars, figure1:

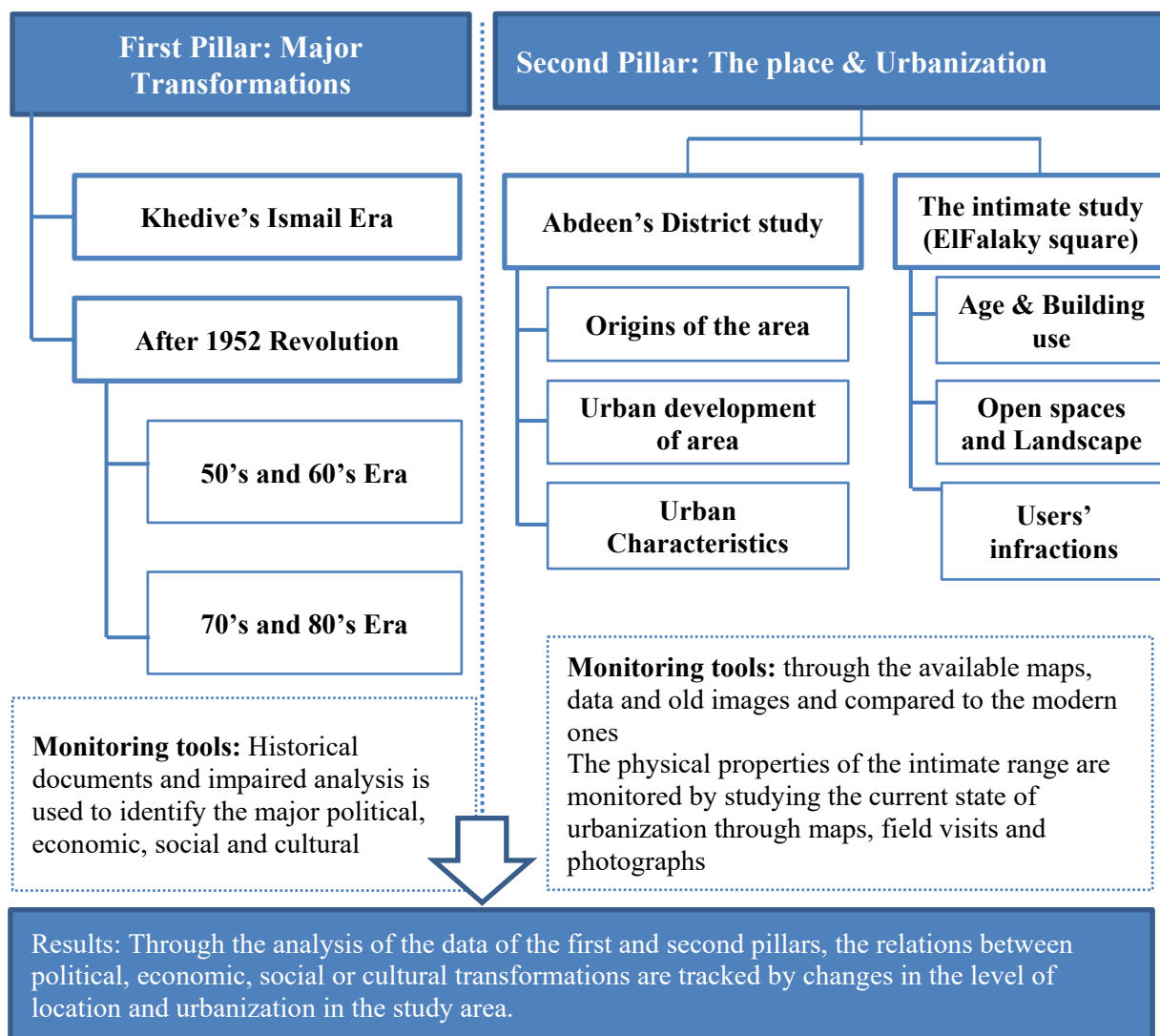


Figure 1. The Research Methodology (Authors)

3. First Pillar: Major Transformations

This section describes the Political and economic transformations from Khedive’s Ismail Era to the modern era and their impact on the social and cultural aspects of the community

There are two distinct periods during the last century, which are radically different in their orientations and outcomes. The first period is characterized by the era of Ishmiel (khedive’s Ismail ruling time), which extended from the year 1836 until the revolution of 1952. The khedive adopted the policy of Westernization and lasted until the stage before the revolution.

Then came the revolution of 1952, which was an important political event in Egypt's history, where the whole governance system was transformed from a monarchy to a Republic system. The new system at that time had far-reaching implications for social and cultural life in Egypt. Moreover, Political and economic trends were modified during Sadat's era in the 1970s and early 1980s, resulting in a change in the social and cultural aspects of Egyptian society. The following are the most important political and economic changes that occurred during the era of Ismail and the post-revolution era and its social and cultural effects.

Table 1. Political and Economic transformations and their impact on Social and Cultural aspects in Khedive Ismail Era

Khedive Ismail Era 1836	
Political and economic transformations	The impact of transitions on social and cultural aspects
<p>1. Political Aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A consultative council and a Senate had been established, which became the system of governance in Egypt until the present time. - There was a flaw in the judicial system as a result of foreign concessions. <p>2. Economic aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ismail was the first to pave the way for Europe's economic control of Egypt. - The economic conditions of the country were deteriorated due to the large debt borrowed by Ismail to adopt the Western model. - The benefits of debt eroded most of the sources of income and taxes increased significantly. - Ismail focused on the import of European luxury (Ossama, 1997) 	<p>1. Social aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Egyptian social apparatus developed greatly in the era of Ismail. - The Egyptian society shall be of the ruling class, the class of dignitaries, the class of professionals, the staff, the scholars of Al-Azhar, the people of oppression and the class of foreigners. <p>The aspects of European life have entered into social life in Egypt.</p> <p>2. Cultural aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ismail's reign included his intellectual and cultural renaissance in several fields. - The press was active and <i>The book house</i> and scientific societies were established to spread the culture.
<p>The Urban Laws of the Study Area (During Ismail's Age): Khedive Isma'il ordered the expansion of the area extending from the Nile coast at the army barracks (in the Nile Palace) to <i>Bab El Louk</i>. <i>Ali Pasha Mubarak</i>¹ chose 617 feddans for the new neighborhood. After the paving of the streets and pavements, Khedive Ismail granted the land to those who would praise, For 2000 pounds (Nazmi, 2004)</p>	

¹ **Ali Pasha Mubarak** (1823-1893 CE) was an Egyptian public works and education minister during the second half of the nineteenth century. He is often considered one of the most influential and talented of Egypt's 19th century reformers

Table 2. Political and economic transformations and their impact on Social and Cultural aspects in 50's and 60's Era

50's and 60's Era, President Gamal AdelNasser Era	
<p>Political and economic transformations</p> <p>1. Political aspects</p> <p>- Socialist thought prevailed in the period following the 1952 Revolution, where it aimed at improving the economic conditions the low and middle classes. The size of the capital class was reduced to deflect differences.</p> <p>The policy of the state in the socialist period was based on the possession of all means of production. (Ossama, 1997)</p> <p>2. Economic aspects:</p> <p>The impact of the application of socialism ideas in the first period on the economic aspects represented in the insurance movement.</p> <p>The growth of the military establishment and the increase in its privileges and the growth of the bureaucracy due to the increasing state of intervention in social and political life, the reduction of the role of the private sector, and the state's control over the means of economic production (Amin, 2009)</p>	<p>The impact of transitions on social and cultural aspects</p> <p>1. Social aspects:</p> <p>- Social concepts have changed many of the social conditions that prevailed over the long period, as they worked to dissolve the differences between classes.</p> <p>- Many middle-class professionals and military officers began to climb the social ladder.</p> <p>The result of all this was the reduction of the economic and social centres, the aristocracy of agriculture and the high dependence of industry and commerce, the social and economic upgrading of large groups of land tenants, the bureaucrats who opened the door to bureaucratic growth and the expansion of the role of the state in the economy.</p> <p>2. Cultural aspects:</p> <p>- Expanding education and extending free education to universities</p> <p>- After 1952 revolution, the researchers returned from research scholarships to Europe and America, which resulted in the change of academic movement in Egypt. (Ossama, 1997)</p>
<p>The most important urban laws:</p> <p>In July 1952, the laws of 1952-1958 were issued in 1961,1965 aimed at reducing the commercial value of the different segments of the housing according to the dates of construction. The total of these reductions was approximately 35% of the original rent value (Rajeh, 2007)</p>	
70's and 80's Era, President Sadat ² and Hosney Mobarak ³	
<p>Political and economic transformations</p> <p>1. Political aspects</p> <p>-The policy of economic openness was applied after the 1973 war (capitalism). The Capitalism extended between 1974-1982,</p> <p>-The new openness at that time flourished huge transformations in the class system.</p> <p>2. Economic aspects:</p> <p>The application of the idea of economic openness after 1973 had an impact on the growth of the private sector.</p> <p>Economic openness means three things: opening the door to economic goods and investments for Egyptians, pulling the country out of its various forms of intervention in individual decisions and gradually relinquishing many of its economic and social responsibilities in the 1960s. (Jalal Amin, 2009)</p>	<p>The impact of transitions on social and cultural aspects</p> <p>. Social aspects</p> <p>- A coup occurred in the social structures in the period of openness and increased discrimination and social inequality between classes.</p> <p>- Economic openness has accelerated the rate of social mobility and the improvement of economic centers through several channels, the most important of which is the migration to the Gulf countries, the high rate of inflation, the work in the service of foreigners. (Jalal Amin, 2009)</p> <p>2. Cultural aspects:</p> <p>The application of the of opening up policy led to the spread of consumer values of inflation as a result of changes in the class system where categories without culture and without origin rose to the social pyramid (Ossama, 1997)</p>

² Sadat was the president of Egypt from 1970 to 1980, and was killed in a great ceremony of the 1973 war celebrations

³ Hosney Mubarak was the president of Egypt from 1980 until 2011 where ehe was stepped down in 2011 revolution

The return of the policy of openness to the urban aspects:

The opening-up policy led to sudden rise in the prices of construction land within the city of 200-300% for speculation policies. The value of the flat meter varied according to the location of the city center, and also the economy of speculations was highly surged. (Nazmi, 2004)

4. Second Pillar: The place & Urbanization, Study area, Abdin, Cairo

Abdin district is one of the most important areas that witnessed important historical events in Egypt, where the government location existed there for a long time in Egypt (during the era of Ismail until the 1952 revolution). The royal palace also housed the homes of many politicians at that time.

5. Urban development of Abdin area

On Ismail's visit to Paris, he met with *Hussmann*, who reorganized the city of Paris. Ismail agreed that he would come to Cairo to set up a new plan and consider building new neighbourhoods and new fields. The result was "Ismaili Cairo," referring to Khedive Ismail (El-Tarabili, 2003). Khedive Ismail ordered the expansion of the area extending from the Nile coast at the army barracks (in the Nile Palace) to *Bab El Louk*. The chief engineer of Egypt, *Ali Pasha Mubarak*, assigned this region to a cultural confrontation. He chose 617 feddans for the new neighborhood and planned the streets and lanes on straight lines, and organized the sidewalks.

Thus, the area became after planning the most beautiful areas of modern Cairo, as *Ali Pasha Mubarak* mentioned and was then compromised for the high-class standard housing. With the creation of streets in the style of Parisian streets, the business district moved from the threshold to these modern streets and became bustling with business, markets and banks (El-Tarabili, 2006)

6. The intimate area El Falaky⁴ square in Abdin

This square had existed since the Middle Ages and is known as *Bab el-Louk* square, which was wider than the current. In 1875, a great garden was established in this square and a decision was made to fill the square with flowers and then named *The Flowers Square*. In 1930, *Mahmoud Pasha El Falaky* was living in a villa overlooking the square and He was one of Egypt's most famous pioneers in engineering and astronomy (Al-Hadidi, 2009). He held a number of positions, including the Director of Public Works in 1882 and the Minister of Public Knowledge in 1884. For the surrounding buildings in Falaky square Figure 2.

7. The transformation of the surrounding buildings of ElFalaky square

Ahmed Orabi's palace was located on the eastern side of the square. *Ahmed Orabi* Pasha inhabited the palace in 1880 after the British occupation of Egypt and the confiscation of the property of Ahmed Orabi, the English army used a palace as a hospital for their soldiers, and then inhabited by some British priests. This palace was subsequently demolished and its present location is *Banaga* building. Figure 4 shows the transformation of all building surrounding the square.

⁴ ElFalaky is an Arabic name which means the astronomer, which was the name of Mahmoud El Falaky who was working in



Figure 2. Abdin Palace, in the year 1952

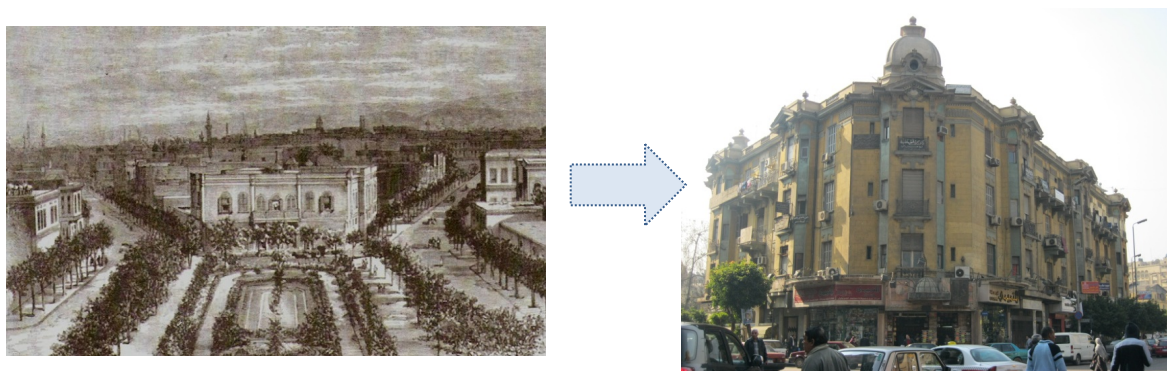


Figure 3. The transformation of Ahmad Orabi palace 1880 to *Banaga* building.

Also *El Falaky* square has witnessed the transformation of other buildings, like *Mahmoud El Falaky* Villa which was demolished in the year 1970 after the dominance of economic channels and the priority of commercial aspects, figure 4.

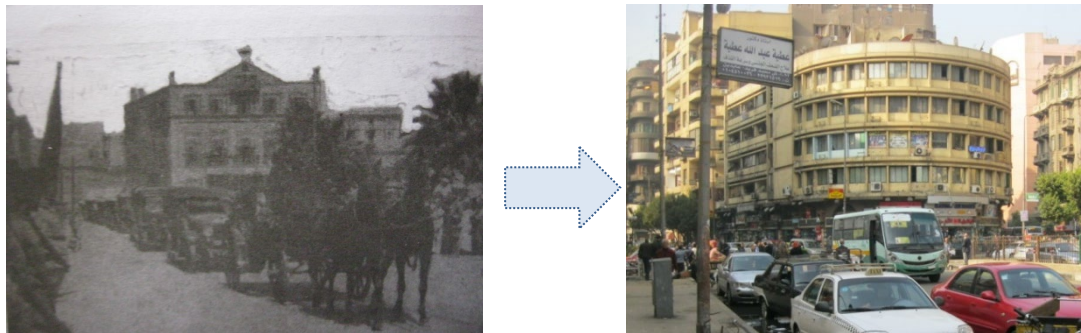


Figure 4. The transformation of ElFalaky palace into a commercial building in the year 1970

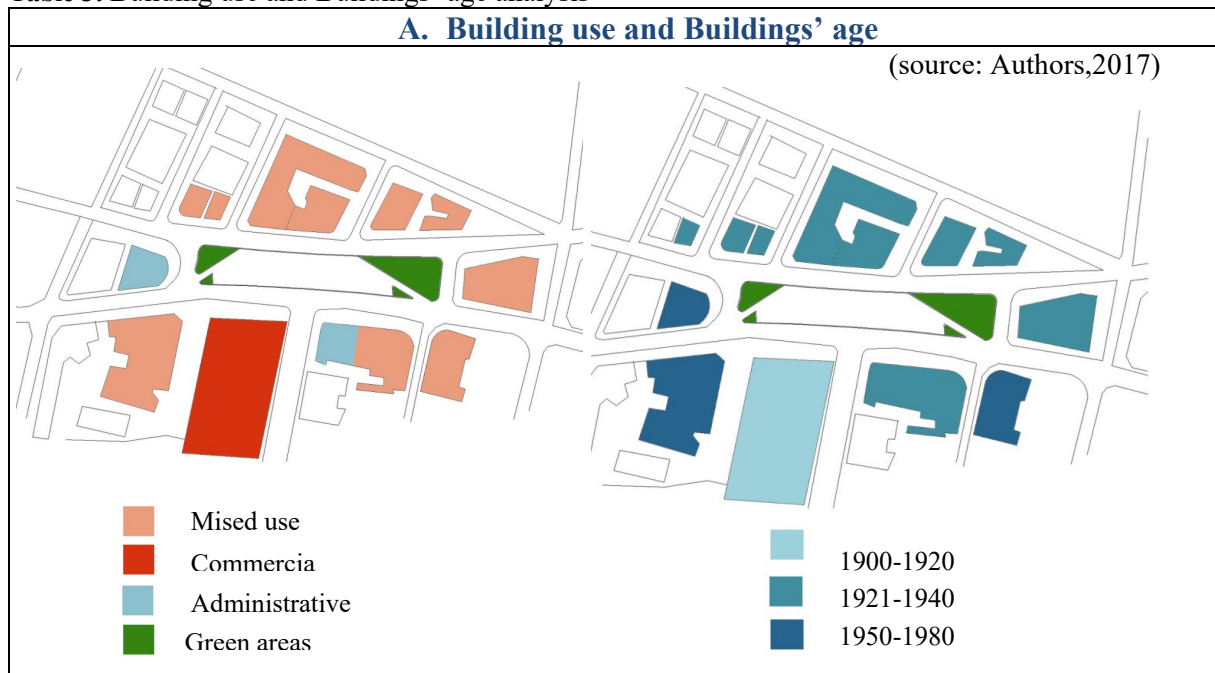


Figure 5. Abdin Palace in the year 1952 after the military groups besieged the palace, which is now transformed into a museum

Urban Characteristics of El Falaky square

This section presents the urban characteristics of *El Flaky square*; including, the building use, the building age the landscape, and the users’ infringements on façade.

Table 3. Building use and Buildings’ age analysis



Analysis: Most of the buildings are mixed use. The markets and shops occupied the entire ground floor of the area, except *Bab El Louk market*, which is a commercial centre. The administrative buildings are the building of *the Chamber of Commerce and Building No. (23)*. Analysis: The oldest building in the area is the Bab El Louk, which was built in 1913, and there are some buildings dating from 1921 to 1940 and their styles are *Neo Classic* and *Art Deco*. Other buildings had modern styles as they return from the year 1970. Others dating from 1950 to 1980 reflect the international style (Hawass, 2002)

Table 4. Landscape and open spaces analysis

B. Landscape and open spaces



The figures show the Falaky square now, which is transformed into a car park (Google earth, 2016) and the same square in the year 1880 when it was named The Floral square

It was established in 1875 and was called the Floral Square and then the *Falaky Square*. However, due to the increase in the rate of ownership of cars since the beginning of economic development and the shortage of parking spaces, the heart of the *Falaky square* was exploited as a parking area of 1540 square meters.

8. Conclusion

There has been a lot of changes in the urban characteristics of AlFalaky, which is the result of major changes in policies and the social aspects of the user:

- Many properties have been transformed from residential to commercial and administrative uses due to the rise in land prices (the 1970s and 1980s following the policy of economic openness). The buildings that were raised were built in the modern style 1960s with the aim of investing.
- User additions on the facades were reflective of the transformation of the uses of the area from residential to commercial, where the facades were filled with signs to advertise commercial and administrative services.
- The use of residential, commercial and administrative uses has encouraged the emergence of many infringements on the sidewalks in the field and lack of interest in the public areas, which led to the deterioration of the place.
- The character of the area has several different models for different periods of time, each reflecting different ideas. Some buildings belong to the 1920s. They tend to *Neo Classic* and *Art Deco*, others belong to the fifties and sixties and tend to the international style (following the return of architects from Europe) Modern era in the 1970s, which lost much of its original identity.

Table 5. Users’ infraction analysis

C. Users’ infractions	
(Authors,2017)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some users have closed the balconies with aluminium and some of them have changed the colours of the balconies 2. There are a large number of signs added to the units because of the change in the uses of some residential buildings to commercial and administrative, and therefore inhabitants added banners on the facades to advertise the presence of services and administrative or commercial offices. 3. Air conditioning units have been added to the facades. 	

9. Recommendations

- As a result of the shift to capital policy, the policy of public dealing with buildings became the policy of bringing material benefit, and this was evident in the island transformation of the uses of buildings in the area of the astronomical field.

- The problem therefore requires an end to user additions, through the development of deterrent laws in the transformation of uses that lead to gradual degradation of the regions in general.
- The identity of the areas with buildings, which are now considered as monuments should be preserved, and the prevention of infringements, such as the addition of floors and the reinforcement of balconies and encroachments on the pavement, which further deteriorates the region.
- Community participation is very important in preventing the deterioration of historical places, so NGOs and Governments must involve civil and community organizations to interfere with the residents of the historical areas to fulfil their needs, without the need for additions that damage the character of the place.

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