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## HERDSMEN AND FARMERS CONFLICT IN BIRNIN-GWARI LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE

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Previous studies mainly touched on the causes of conflict in governance with little researches on Farmers / Herdsmen Conflict thus this research was carried out to cover the gap. The objective of this paper is to examine the causes of Conflict between herdsmen and farmers and its effects on socio-economic development of Kaduna State Nigeria. The Marxist theory of conflict, Resource scarcity theory of conflict, Environmental scarcity theory of conflict, theory of the tragedy of the commons and the Neo-Malthusian theory of conflict were adopted for the study. Data were collected through primary and secondary sources. Five communities comprising; Dogon-dawa, Kuyello, Magajin Gari, Dangaji and Randaji were purposefully selected for the study. Key informant interviews were conducted with 5 Key Informants comprising religious leaders, politicians, community leaders, farmers and herdsmen as well as security agents and four (2) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) conducted with herdsmen and farmers. In addition, a total of 120 copies of questionnaires was administered to 30 residents of herdsmen, 35 residents of farmers, 25 security agents, 20 community leaders and politicians from selected communities. Secondary data were collected from published books, journal articles and the internet. Quantitative data were analyzed using narrative and descriptive techniques such as frequency and percentage distribution while the qualitative data were content analyzed. Findings from FGDs showed that most herdsmen and farmers have adopted social behavior as a way of living to enhance peaceful co-existence among them in the communities. The findings show that Conflict often caused as a result of destruction of farmers' crops and trespassing by herdsmen, absence of grazing reserve as well as drought and water scarcity is rampant in Birnin-Gwari Local Government Area of Kaduna state, mainly because, the people are predominantly farmers. In conclusion, the study generated a synthesis of information on the root causes and mechanisms of conflict resolution and affirms the need for proper control of the resources that are responsible for conflicts between herdsmen and farmers in Birnin-Gwari Local Government Area.

**Key word:** Conflict, Farmers, Herdsmen and Local Government.

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### INTRODUCTION

Twenty First Century is the century of peace because the war against nation, a nation fighting nation has diminished, but conflict is taking another dimension of international to local conflict. The major threat to peace among nations in twenty First Century is internal conflicts such as the case of Rwanda between the two major ethnic groups, the Sudan is another clear picture of that between North and South Sudan, Liberia etc. Global Conflict Risk Index link the occurrence of conflict to five factors such as social, economic, security, political, geographical/environmental. While internal conflict is caused by factors such as interstate, national power and sub-national conflict (table 1). This however, is the case of the conflict between the herdsmen and farmers in Birnin-Gwari local government, Kaduna state Nigeria, where the conflict is very rampant. The research has shown that, there is a decrease in the exchange of relationship between the farmers and the herdsmen, and this has created a cultural gap between them. This is reflected in extensive sedentarization and an increase in conflicts with each other claiming rights of ownership to the land (resource use). These have been increasingly interpreted as religious, political and ethnic, even though the underlying factors may be competition for access to resources (Chitando and Tarusarira, 2019).

Majority of the people in Birnin-Gwari local government earn their living through farming as most of the Fulani who migrated to the local government rely on the land for their pasture. This is because land is a major factor of production which requires the introduction of a legal and institutional framework for proper management. In essence, land serves as a factor of production, a store of value or wealth, a status symbol and a source of social and political influence. Land becomes relatively scarce as more people continue to see the importance and value of it. Nevertheless, as the demand for land increases, the relative value of it rise, and as such, land becomes increasingly a source of conflicts among economic demand social groups in the community. The predominant causes of the conflict between the farmers and herdsmen include environmental scarcity and damaging of crops among others. The notion that conflicts are related to resource scarcity has drawn many attentions which must be treated with caution. Conflict can arise when people place multiple and competing demands on a resource, yet, such circumstances do not always result in tensions or disputes (McGregor, 2014). Besides, poverty is sometimes treated as an obvious cause of conflict, yet, when and why poor people decide to support confrontation and violence is unclear or not yet convincingly established (Oli *et al.*, 2018).

The grazing appetites of their animals dictate their place of abode. This explains their mobile and nomadic status (Hoffman *et al.*, 2008). Fulani livelihoods as highly dependent on cattle rearing communities are often mobile in search of fresh grasses and they also resist any area that could be hazardous to the health of their herds, such as tsetse fly infested environments.

Variable	Score
<b>Political</b>	
Regime type	3.9
Lack of democracy	1.5
Government effectiveness	6.9
Level of repression	10.0
Empowerment	7.9
<b>Security</b>	
Recent Internal Conflict	10.0
Neighbor with HVC	10.0
Years since HVC	10.0
<b>Social</b>	
Corruption	7.7
Ethnic Power Change	0.0
Ethnic competition	7.0
Transnational ethnic bound	6.7
Homicide rate	5.9
Infant Mortality	7.8
<b>Economy</b>	
GDP per capital	5.0
Income inequality	5.3
Openness	7.8
Food Security	3.8
Unemployment	4.4
<b>Geography/ Environment</b>	
Water stress	4.1
Oil Production	9.8
Structural Constraints	8.0
Population size	9.4
Youth bulge	7.9

**Table 1: Nigeria scores in various dimensions of Conflict.**

Source : Global Conflict Risk Index (2019)

The issues of different in cultures and poor education attainment marginalize the Fulani community resulting in the feeling of insecurity in any local farming community they find themselves.

The conflict between the herdsmen and farmers are always prevalent during the dry season when farmers’ burn grasses preparatory to farming and hunting while the Fulani herdsmen burn in order to induce the growth of fresh grasses for their cattle. Grass burning by local farmers and water scarcity during this period impels the herdsmen to graze in the valleys where they can still find grasses and water for their cattle. During the

grazing process, they cross the paths of farmers which is usually encroaches on farmlands, causing the potential destruction of crops. Besides, the trampling of the soil by these animals compresses it and makes tillage in the next planting season difficult. The necessity for research in this area is all the more urgent, since the Local Government has been associated with herdsmen and farmers’ conflicts and violence.

In January 14, 2018 ten persons were feared dead on Saturday as rampaging Fulani herdsmen attacked two villages in the Birnin-Gwari Local Government of Kaduna State. The suspected herdsmen, it was learnt, invaded Dangaji and Ungwan Gajere villages and unleashed terror on residents on Friday night. The justification for this research is based on the fact that Birnin-Gwari local government has witnessed a lot of herdsmen and farmers as well as communal conflicts among the states in the North-western Region of the country. This leaves many questions unanswered. How important are herder-farmer linkages as food and income sources to herdsmen and farmers? What is the impact of societal and policy change on relations? Under what conditions are relations suspended or disbanded? Which villages are prone to incidences of conflict and why? What impact does conflict has on the food security and socio-economic status of the different stakeholders? Looking at the magnitude and prospect of the above raised issues, this work in addition, examined the root causes of this conflict for its better understanding in Birnin-Gwari local government area, Kaduna state, where this ugly scenario between the herdsmen and farmers have claimed more lives.

**Research Questions:** Based on the above identified problems, the following research questions assisted us in arriving at a logical conclusion in this study.

1. What are the causes of herdsmen’ and farmers’ conflicts?
2. What impact does conflict has on the food security and socio-economic status of the different stakeholders in Birnin-Gwari Local Government?

**Aim and Objectives of the Study:** The aim of the study is to assess Herdsmen pastoralist’ and sedentary farmer’s conflicts and also the objectives were investigated based on gathered information in a bid to ascertain how the conflict affect development and peaceful coexistence in the Local Government. Due to the above, the objectives of this research include:

To achieve the set aim, the following specific objectives have been set:

1. To identify and discuss the major causes of conflict between herdsmen and farmers in Birnin-Gwari Local Government Area.
2. To examine the impact of conflict on the food security and socio-economic status of the different stakeholders in Birnin-Gwari Local Government

3. **Hypothesis/Assumption: H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a significant relationship between Herdsmen and Farmers conflict and socioeconomic development of Birnin-Gwari Local Government area.

**Theoretical Framework:** In order to give this work, theoretical backing, five theories were used to situate this study. They are Marxist theory of conflict, Resource scarcity theory of conflict, Environmental scarcity theory of conflict, theory of the tragedy of the commons and the Neo-Malthusian theory of conflict.

**Marxist Theory of Conflict:** The Marxist conflict approach derives from the assertion that social relations of production under capitalism generates two major and distinct classes in the society (Baechler, 2013) the bourgeoisie class, i.e. the dominant class (owners of the factors of production) and the proletariat (the subordinate class who submit their labor to the former to earn a living. This social relation is inherently antagonistic and conflicting. Thus, there are always frictions and contests over who gets what, when, and how. Therefore, the Marxist theory of conflict has a direct approach towards this study, with the facts that it gives about conflict as a catalyst to economic activities. Also, as it is observed in this study conflict in general are having great effect not only on the economic but also the social and political activities of the country. In the words of Marx, "it is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness". Hence, dialectical materialism, as its defining method is characterized by:

- i. Dynamic character of social reality
- ii. Inter-relatedness of different levels of structure
- iii. Primacy of material condition

**Resource Scarcity Theory of Conflict:** Ecological borders are in most cases, also ethnic and cultural borders. In essence, ecological borders become ethnic and cultural lines of demarcation, where people meet to co-operate or to fight. For instance, in most West Africa countries, including Nigeria, an ethnic dimension comes to play in the conflict which often appears to oppose two broad ethnic groups, the Fulani pastoralists versus a population of group of sedentary farmers who are made up of a variety of ethnic groups. This ethnic dimension to the conflict in the views of Stan (2014) indicates that not only the increase in competition over natural resources, but also a breakdown in the balance between the two groups.

Chitando and Tarusarira (2019) view conflict of interests as part of the fundamental relationship between different resource users; and once there is a conflict of interests, a stage is set for competition that may in turn lead to violent conflict. Though, there is no automatic cause effect relationship between conflict of interests, competitions and conflicts, the likelihood is increased with scarcity of resources on which the groups depend, and the asymmetrical manner in which the impacts of scarcity are distributed between herdsman and farmers. In line with the theoretical opinion adopted in the work however, it is necessary to redefine the whole concept of scarcity and assess the extent to which it plays a role in competition and conflict among multiple resource users.

**Environmental Scarcity Theory of Conflict:** The

environmental effects of human activity are a function of, first, the vulnerability of the ecosystem and, second, the product of the total population and that population's physical activity per capital in the region. This theory was proposed, developed and well-articulated best in the works of (Odoh *et al.*, 2012). Homer-Dixon uses the term "environmental scarcity" to refer to scarcity of renewable resources. Odoh *et al.* (2012). argues that environmental change, population growth and unequal social distribution, are the three major sources of scarcity which lead to violent conflicts. First, Homer-Dixon identifies supply-induced scarcity, which is caused by the loss of resources such as a lack of quality drinking water or fertile land.

Second, population growth and migration can increase the person's demand leading to demand-induced scarcity. Environmental scarcity produces four principal social effects: decreased agricultural potential, regional economic decline, population displacement, and the disruption of legitimized and authoritative institutions and social relations.

**Theory of the Tragedy of the Commons:** The theory of the tragedy of the commons states that when a resource is collectively owned by a group of people, each will exploit the resource, over using it, ignoring the group's collective interest, and thus ultimately destroy the resource. The theory postulated by Tonah (2006). He explained the 'tragedy' by using the example of a pasture which is open to all to use. This open pasture is used by herdsman to allow their cattle to graze and each herdsman will continue to add cattle to the pasture so as to expand the amount of proceeds coming from their herd. The commons dilemma stands as a model for a great variety of present resource problems such as fresh water scarcity, land degradation and pollution of grazing yards and the depletion of non-renewable energy sources. So in terms of Hardin's theory, the earth's atmosphere is the 'common', the 'tragedy' is the damage done to the atmosphere that causes global warming, climate change and environmental scarcity shared by all. As the resources become scarce, competition and conflict over them will increase.

**The Neo-Malthusian Theory of Conflict:** The neo-Malthusian theory predicts that world population would soon exceed the resource base and lead to serious environmental destruction, widespread hunger and violent conflicts. Turner *et al.* (2006) is the most influential scholar of the neo-Malthusian position. He and other scholars Baechler (2013) argued that resource scarcities can cause violent intra-state conflict such as group identity clashes, ethnic clashes, strife and insurgency.

In relating this theory to the research due to the increase in the world population, the resources becomes scarce and as such pieces of land that were reserved as grazing yard for nomads will be use by the farmers which eventually leads to conflicts. For conflict to break out, the societal balance of power must provide the opportunity for grievances to be expressed as challenges to authority. The breakdown of

common property regimes through a joint process of state appropriation of land as well as the general penetration of capitalist market relations into the countryside has led to the marginalization of the politically weaker section of the rural communities. When groups organized around clear social cleavages such as ethnicity or religion, articulate grievances, the probability of civil violence is higher. As different ethnic and cultural groups are propelled together under circumstances of deprivation and stress, we should expect inter-group hostilities in which a group would emphasize its own identity while denigrating, discriminating against and attacking outsiders.

**METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

**Quantitative Research:** The quantitative aspect of this research, questionnaire was adapted from previous studies to suit the topic and reliability test was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire in line with suggestion of [Pallant and Unwin \(2005\)](#). 400 questionnaires were distributed to the stakeholders of Farmers/ Herders conflict in Birnin Gwari Local Government

**Population and Sample Size:** Population is made up of individuals, groups, communities and nations in clusters. Population in research is determined by the type of problem the research wants to address. In research, there are basically two types of population, the parent or universe population and the sample population which referred to as the sub-set of population or sample size. The population of this study includes the stakeholders of Farmers/ Herders conflict in Birnin Gwari Local Government.

**Population of the study:** The population of Birnin Gwari Local Government according 2006 census in [table 2](#).

Birnin Gwari Local Government	
Total	349,000

[Table 2: showing the population of Birnin Gwari Local Government](#)

**Sampling Technique:** The study adopted simple random sampling technique.

**Sample size:** The sample size was mentioned in [table 3](#).

Population	Sample
50000	381
75000	381
1000000	384

[Table 3: Determination of Sample Size.](#)

Source: Krejcie & Morgan (1970).

Therefore based on the above table of Krejcie & Morgan (1970) on determination of sample size, the study took sample size of 384 and the analysis was as follows on the [table 4](#). From the table below, Birnin Gwari has population of 349,000 and the sample size is 384.

**Method of Data Analysis and Presentation:** Data collected for this study were analyzed using and regression analysis to analyse the data. The regression analysis was used using SPSS version 20. From the table below, Birnin Gwari has population of 349,000 and the sample size is 384.

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Birnin Gwari Local Government	
Population	349,000
Sampling	384

[Table 4: Sampling for the study.](#)

**Data Analysis:** Data collected through the questionnaire were presented in tables and analyzed using regression. The data from the questionnaires were measured on a five-point Likert scale and further interpreted using level of significance. Based on the analysis, presentation and interpretation of the various data collected, hypothesis postulated for the study was tested through the employment of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The analysis and presentation enabled the researcher to validate or reject the research hypothesis. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher with the help of research assistants in the study areas who were trained by the researcher to assists in speedy administration and retrieval of the questionnaires.

**Questionnaire:** The reliability of the original questionnaire was checked by measuring the Cronbach alpha of the constructs. It appeared that the alpha of all the measured constructs was above the .70. Therefore, the scale used could be regarded as reliable in line with the suggestions of [Turner et al. \(2006\)](#). However, [Tonah \(2006\)](#) identified two probable threats to the reliability of her questionnaire that could also be relevant for my research. Firstly, the additional constructs had to be reformulated. This increases the risk that the interpretation of the items deviates from the original meaning of the item. In addition, a limitation of the study is that it might be based on social desirability. The constructs involve self-rating items or are based on the respondents – subjective – perception. The result is that the data of this research might be influenced by social desirable answers. Nevertheless, the additional constructs were carefully selected. The items of these constructs were developed by other researchers in previous studies, and the constructs were originally internally consistent (Cronbach alpha >.70) which will be further described in the following section.

**Response Rate:** In this study, a total of **400** questionnaires were distributed in Birnin Gwari Local Government. In an attempt to achieve high response rates, several phone call reminders and SMS were sent to respondents who were yet to complete their questionnaires after four weeks. Therefore, the outcomes of these attempts yielded 390 returned questionnaires, out of 400 questionnaires that were distributed to the target respondents. Of these 390 questionnaires, 5 were unusable because a significant part of those questionnaires were not completed by the participants; and the remaining 385 useable questionnaires were used for further analysis. This accounted for 96% valid response rate. Therefore, a response rate of 96% is considered adequate for the analysis in this study because [McGregor \(2014\)](#) suggested



that a response rate of 30% is sufficient for surveys (table 5).

Response	Frequency
No. of distributed questionnaires	400
Returned questionnaires	390
Returned and usable questionnaires	385
Returned and excluded questionnaires	5
Questionnaires not returned	10
Response rate	98%
Valid response rate	96%

Table 5: Questionnaires distributed.

**Data Screening and Preliminary Analysis:** Initial data screening is very crucial in any regression analysis because it helps researchers identify any possible violations of the key assumptions regarding the application of techniques of data analysis. Additionally, initial data screening helps researchers to better understand the data collected for further analysis. Prior to initial data screening, all the 385 returned and usable questionnaires were coded and entered into the SPSS such as S1-S10 and A1-A10. The following preliminary data analyses were performed: (1) missing value analysis, (2) assessment of outliers, and (3) normality test.

#### RESEARCH FINDINGS

From the table 6 above, it shows B- with .558, Std Error .046, Beta .532, t12.047 and significance at 0.000 (table 6).

From the table 7, it shows R has .532, R square .283, Adjusted R Square .281 and Std Error of the Estimate .18039

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	Constant	0.227	0.026		8.800	0.0
	MEAN confl	0.558	0.046	0.532	12.047	0.0

a. Dependent Variable: MEANSOC

Table 6: Coefficients obtained from the data.

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.532 <sup>a</sup>	0.283	0.281	0.18039

Table 7: : Model summary.

#### MAJOR FINDINGS

The study reveals that, there is a strong and significant relationship between herdsmen/farmers conflicts and socio-economic development of Birnin-Gwari local government area.

#### CONCLUSION

This research was prompted by the zeal to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and the development of peace in our society, mostly in conflicts torn states like Kaduna State and other states in the Middle Belt and North-western region of Nigeria. The study analytically and critically looked at the various movement and activities of the farmers (that is, the Gwari's, the kamuku's and Hausa's) and the herdsmen (Fulani)

into the present day Birnin-Gwari local government, and the different causes of conflict between the farmers and herdsmen and effects of the conflict on socio-economic development of the local government and other land related issues. Field studies showed that the high increase of conflicts between pastoralists and farmers are becoming a matter of concern not only in Birnin-Gwari local government, but also across Kaduna state. Destruction of farmers' farm products by pastoralists' herds is the major cause of this conflict in the local government. In all countries including Nigeria, the poor communities, women, remote communities, pastoralists and other marginalized groups often encountered difficulties accessing courts and officials due to financial, political, social or other constraints. One of the efforts made to avoid future occurrence of this conflicts between these two groups is the clarion call on the different levels of government (federal, state and local) to assist them with grazing lands for their animals and plots of lands for farming. In order to achieve this specific objective, research questions were raised, hypothesis was formulated and literatures related to the study were reviewed. The first chapter focused on the introduction i.e. background to the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, etc.

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was formulated and literatures related to the study were reviewed. The first chapter focused on the introduction i.e. background to the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, etc.

Without doubt, Birnin-Gwari local government is very vulnerable to herdsmen and farmers' conflict as well as communal disputes. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that the effects of herdsmen/farmers conflicts were not based against any socio-economic development programme. This implies that the effect of herdsmen/farmers conflict caused so many effects such as, destruction of lives and properties, food shortages due to the destruction of farmlands and crops already planted insecurity and underdevelopment of the local government. Consequently, trespassing has been the major cause of herdsmen/farmers conflict. This implies that most of the farmers take law into their hands and negligence by the authority to pay attention towards reconciling the warring parties in the area, infrastructure like social security, adequate standard of living, road network, fertilizer communication facilities, good drinking water, etc are so low and were not provided.

However, farmers are mobilized for cooperative organization and formation; farmer/community associations, several strategies were adopted by government and NGOs to resolve the herdsmen/farmers conflict in Birnin-Gwari local government. Coordination of data collection at primary level was low, awareness creation through resolving the conflict between herdsmen/farmers in Birnin-Gwari Local Government is also low. From this study, it is a known fact that the human being is a sacred creature in Africa context. Thus, killing of human being unjustly is an abomination. This is because our spiritual environment is occupied by spirit which controls and sees every day activities of the environment. In essence, every group should shun violent to ensure peace and harmony. In sum, the government should collaborate with the different community leaders for an agreeable format and allocation of lands for pastoral purposes.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Looking at the major findings of this research through the different methods applied, that is, various answers from key informant, focus group discussion and research questionnaires, the following recommendations are hereby made. This is in a bid to enhance the relationship between the herdsmen and farmers in the Local Government.

**Introduction of collaboration method of conflict resolution:** Collaboration assists in building trust, confidence and understanding among people. Thus, a direct collaborative method between herdsmen and farmers is recommended for the resolution of the conflict. This is based on the fact that, those that collaborates and live together is likely to establish intimate friendship and mutual respect among themselves than those who do not. The chief-in-council mechanism both at the clan and district levels should be encouraged while appeals should be made to the supreme traditional councils between the herdsmen(Fulani) and

farmers to resolve their differences through constructive dialogue and by sharing things (projects) in common.

**Creation of grazing land:** The primary reason for most of the conflict is destruction of crops by the wandering animals since there is no specific place for them to stay. Thus, the state government should collaborate with the different community leaders and chiefs, to give a good portion of land to migrating pastoralists as grazing land. This would prevent the occurrence of the frequent conflict between the farmers and the herdsmen. However, the herdsmen should negotiate with the farmers on fallowing farm before grazing on such lands. Likewise, crop farmers should be encouraged to sell fodder to them where and when necessary to feed their animals.

This approach would prevent the incessant clashes between the farmers and the herdsmen and lead to peaceful co-existence in the Local Government area.

**Peace-building and sensitization programmes:** There should also be put in place an adequate peace-building and sensitization programmes by the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the Local Government in order to help in sensitizing and educating the crop farmers about the evil of conflicts and benefits of a peaceful co-existence between them in the area.

**Provision of agricultural extension services:** Government and NGOs should do more in providing the necessary agricultural extension services and other critical inputs such as; a good fertilizer, insecticides, pesticides, agricultural equipment and soft loans to the rural farmers in order to enhance their capacity and capabilities towards maintaining a peaceful co-existence between the farmers and herdsmen in the study area.

There is the need to improve on the strategies adopted for agricultural improvements such as; fertilizer, agro-chemicals, improved seeds, improved seedlings, improved breeds of livestock, tractors and implements, veterinary drugs and vaccines, agricultural creditors, awareness creation through the maintenance of peace and educating them about the evil of conflict on socio-economic development of their Local Government.

**Identification and punishment of erring culprits:** It was discovered during the course of the research that most crisis in Birnin-Gwari Local Government, been it conflict between herdsmen and farmers or land or any communal disputes, are sponsored by the elites, politicians and some chiefs. These personalities encourage and fan these crises by supplying arms and other destructive weapons to the youths as well as finance the crises. Therefore, the state government should identify and punish any personality involved in the promotion of any crises in the Local Government. They should be stripped of their positions, and the government should prosecute them for criminal activities, capable of breaching public peace. These measures would serve as deterrence to other culprits and to future troublemakers.

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