



Strategic Communication and Governance Challenges in the Implementation of Local Government Ordinances using a PLS-SEM Approach

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Abstract. The study evaluates the effectiveness of dissemination strategies by Local Government Units (LGUs) in relaying newly instituted ordinances, in conjunction with the issues experienced by barangay officials in the implementation of those ordinances. The research analyzed associations between dissemination strategies, governance issues, and implementation effectiveness through the utilization of a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling methodology (PLS-SEM). Findings show that while LGU strategies, such as public consultations, town hall meetings, and digital communication strategies, improved ordinance dissemination, significant barriers including budget issues, language barriers, access to technology, as well as training opportunities were considerable barriers to ordinance implementation among barangay officials. PLS-SEM findings provide insight that while dissemination strategy effectiveness impacts ordinance implementation, the influence in responsiveness to governance issues impact implementation effectiveness at a greater level. Consequently, continued attention to communication strategies, resource allocation, and involvement are needed to promote successful policy implementation. This study contributes to empirical evidence of how dissemination strategies and governance issues impact localized policy outcomes in the governance literature.

Keywords: Policy implementation, governance issues, strategic communication, PLS-SEM approach, local ordinances, barangay officials.

1 Introduction

Barangays (the smallest administrative units in the Philippines) are the first point of contact for newly passed ordinances by local government units (LGUs). The implementation of these ordinances is vital to the local governance response, as they facilitate the proper dissemination and application of ordinances that positively impact the community's well-being. However, the implementation of ordinances exclusively relies on how ordinances are conveyed and introduced to the community. For barangay officials, one of the challenges is the transition from ordinance creation to action on the ground,

or what is referred to as "grassroots implementation" – which also often seems like creating the means to successfully inform and engage the local community takes almost as many resources as the actual content development.

Many of the ordinances that are being developed and introduced are multifaceted and complex forms to address a specific context, and it has been shown that LGU officials have been employing more types of digital and participatory governance. Many of the LGU's information dissemination processes, or support engagement, however, still do not turn into effective communication around ordinances for educational, engagement and enforcement. There are many reasons for this, some due to financial limitations, demographic issues, and some related to technology [1]. While digital information platforms (such as social media and municipal websites) may add a new avenue for information transfer, there is the risk that disengaged populations and those who lack technology may be excluded from ordinance awareness, creating informal disparities in the education of ordinances that lead to compliance [2]. Lastly, the level of literacy, in multiple languages, and interest in local governance contributes to the effectiveness of making sure the community is aware of the ordinance, and it may contribute to a lack of engagement [3].

In addition to communication hurdles, the availability of resources, both financial and human resources, plays a large role in the successful implementation of the policy. Traditionally, barangay officials have limited budgets for their activities, restricting their ability to undertake large-scale information campaigns, to conduct community meetings, to produce printed resources, or to generate digital materials. Similarly, limited staffing and training also limit the ability of barangay officials to explain ordinance provisions and field citizen concerns [4]. Even if thought out and given support, policies will have difficulty being implemented adequately at the barangay level without the necessary logistical and administrative infrastructures in place.

The community's willingness to adopt and embrace ordinances also plays a substantial role in implementation. Enforcement could be delayed or blocked altogether due to public objection, misinformation, or lack of citizen participation with the ordinance. Some citizens may resist compliance simply due to their own misconceptions about the ordinance, or their inherent distrust of local government, or just simply not know it was passed [5]. A robust approach that includes online and direct outreach, as well as key stakeholder engagement and collaboration, is critical to solidifying local governance and building policy acceptance and advocacy.

This investigation intends to review the effectiveness of LGU communication tactics and assess governance issues using PLS-SEM. The research, by measuring the effects of these variables on implementation of ordinances, offers observable data about governance models optimally communicating and enforcing policy. The findings will contribute to the burgeoning literature on local governance, strategic communication, and engaged policy implementation to help LGUs improve ordinance enforcement and community engagement.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

This research relies on important theories about the dissemination, barriers, and implementation of ordinances. The Diffusion of Innovations Theory [6] addresses the process of how newly adopted ordinances disseminate throughout communities and factors that may facilitate or hinder their eventual acceptance. This theory illustrates how channels of communication, social systems, and the perceived appropriateness of the ordinance influence the acceptance and compliance of ordinances. When an ordinance is perceived as valuable and perceptually easy to comply with, it will likely be implemented successfully throughout the barangay. However, barriers that may facilitate compliance include the community's resistance to change and the lack of knowledge to inform of the ordinance's existence. Barriers such as these may require officials to mobilize community members to conduct focused campaigns to inform the public.

Communication Accommodation Theory draws attention to the need for barangay officials to appropriately adjust their communication style to meet the varying levels of community members [7]. Since barangays are composed of individuals with varying levels of education and literacy, languages, and access to technology, it is necessary for barangay officials to adapt the way they share information to ensure comprehension of the ordinance. A failure to consider linguistic and cultural differences, or miscommunication, can lead to non-compliance and incorrect information being conveyed to the community. Institutional Theory addresses how ordinances will be encouraged or resisted within the structural context of local government [8]. This theory situates relevant ordinances within the bounds set by regulatory frameworks, social norms, and/or institutional resistance. Ordinances that are communicated clearly or that were adopted without consideration for local governance issues may still be restricted due to issues related to governance such as bureaucratic politics, lack of institutional support for ordinances, and political interests that may pose hindrances to their implementation.

Contingency theory argues that the success of dissemination of an ordinance is contingent on situational variables such as financial resources, availability of educated staff, or technological capabilities [9]. The theory posits that generalized dissemination does not work and that the dissemination strategy should align with the needs and abilities of each barangay. Stakeholder theory supports the belief that successful dissemination and enactment of the ordinance will only be achieved when collaboration occurs between Local Government Units (LGUs), barangay officials, and the community [10]. An ordinance has many stakeholders, but the success of the ordinance dissemination depends on their engagement and willingness to collaborate in a transparent and active manner. If inclusive decision-making and active participation do not occur, there could be resistance and/or lack of enforcement. By bringing together the above theories, this research proposes an overarching framework for understanding how governance challenges, communication strategies, and institutional factors can account for the complexity of disseminating and enacting newly passed ordinances in barangays.

2 Methods

The research utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to evaluate the effectiveness of local government dissemination strategies, and the challenges barangay officials encounter in executing newly passed ordinances. The focus was to ascertain the relationships between the antecedents, and the antecedents to the ordinance implementation, by adopting Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to provide a more comprehensive evaluation. The study instrument was administered to 136 barangay officials in LGU Las Nieves, Agusan del Norte. The survey questionnaire consisted of three sections: (1) Dissemination Strategies, which examined the effectiveness of local government communication methods to the community, (2) Governance Challenges, which assessed barriers that restrict effective dissemination and implementation of ordinances, and (3) Ordinance Implementation, which gauged the degree of enforcement of the newly enacted ordinances in barangays. The survey was pilot tested prior to data collection to ascertain and ensure reliability and validity.

To adequately represent barangay officials across various geographical territories within the municipality, random sampling was used as a method for data collection. Data collection activities followed ethical research principles in accordance with Republic Act No. 10173, the Data Privacy Act of 2012. After obtaining informed consent and confidentiality, further data collection activities were established within the municipality. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize the barangay officials' assessments of dissemination strategies and governance challenges. Pearson-r correlation analysis was used to measure relationships between the variables, and ordinance implementation and to relate both to disseminative strategies and governance challenges. To accomplish additional predictive relationships between the dissemination strategies and governance challenges data, PLS-SEM was used, and subsequently verified through structural equation modeling. PLS-SEM allowed the study to examine both direct and indirect effects for both dissemination strategies and governance challenges on ordinance implementation effectiveness. This method was useful in offering specific directions to the study developed for insightfully supporting data about local policy implementation factors, towards directed recommendations to improve governance strategies.

Results and Discussions.

Descriptive Analysis of Dissemination Strategies and Governance Challenges. To understand the effectiveness of LGU dissemination strategies and the challenges faced by barangay officials, a descriptive statistical analysis was conducted. Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation of key dissemination methods used by LGUs.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics on LGU Dissemination Strategies.

Dissemination Strategy	Mean	Standard Deviation
Public Consultations	4.75	0.48
Town Hall Meetings	4.62	0.55

Dissemination Strategy	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Media Campaigns	4.55	0.61
Printed Materials (Posters, Flyers)	4.41	0.65
LGU Websites and Announcements	4.33	0.68

The findings revealed that public consultations ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 0.48$) rated as the most effective style of ordinance dissemination, indicating that face-to-face communication is more effective in generating increased community participation. Social media campaigns ($M = 4.55$, $SD = 0.61$) also received favorable ratings, demonstrating that there is an increasing trend in communication of ordinances through digital platforms. However, printed materials ($M = 4.40$, $SD = 0.65$) and LGU websites ($M = 4.30$, $SD = 0.68$) were rated lower in effectiveness, suggesting that these communication modes may not have been as effective without using complementary channels.

Additionally, the study explored governance challenges experienced by barangay leaders, Table 2 represents an accumulation of the most significant challenges to ordinance dissemination and implementation.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on Governance Challenges.

Governance Challenge	Mean	Standard Deviation
Budget Constraints	4.81	0.45
Language and Literacy Barriers	4.65	0.52
Limited Access to Technology	4.50	0.58
Inadequate Training and Manpower	4.45	0.60
Community Resistance and Misinformation	4.35	0.67

Budget constraints ($M = 4.80$, $SD = 0.45$) were perceived to be the biggest barrier, indicating a need for additional funding to improve distribution of the ordinance. In addition, language and literacy barriers ($M = 4.65$, $SD = 0.52$) suggest a need for policy communication in multiple languages to be inclusive. Limited access to technology ($M = 4.50$, $SD = 0.58$) implies that although digital platforms are effective, they may not reach all community members at a similar level.

Measurement Model Evaluation. Table 3 shows the examination of the measurement model's Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and Cronbach's Alpha confirms the validity and reliability of the constructs utilized in this dissertation. The AVE values for each of the three constructs—Dissemination Strategies (0.71), Governance Challenges (0.69), and Ordinance Implementation (0.72)—are above the minimum threshold of 0.50 [11], indicating that each construct accounts for more than half of the variance in their indicators, suggesting adequate convergent validity and demonstrating that the selected indicators adequately capture the underlying meaning of the constructs. The Composite Reliability values support the reliability of the constructs; all exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022). The highest Composite Reliability value for this measurement model is 0.91 for the construct Ordinance Implementation, indicating the indicators reflect the intended concept consistently. Both Dissemination Strategies (0.89) and Governance Challenges (0.87)

exhibited high reliability, indicating that the measurement items are closely related and measure internal consistency. Next, the Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.81 to 0.86, and all values exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70, confirming the internal reliability of the constructs.

Table 3. Convergent Validity and Reliability.

Construct	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Dissemination Strategies	0.71	0.89	0.84
Governance Challenges	0.69	0.87	0.81
Ordinance Implementation	0.72	0.91	0.86

The implications of these observations for governance and policy practices are persuasive. One finding that is valid with a high reliability is the reliability and validity of Dissemination Strategies, which indicates that an effective dissemination strategy exists for communicating newly passed ordinances, which present the possibility of higher awareness/understanding and compliance from the public[12]. However, because the Governance Challenges AVE was relatively low (0.69), we can conclude that the Governance Challenges construct is valid, but it may capture a wide range of issues that may need further inquiry. This provides evidence for policymakers to understand that governance challenges could be intrinsic to the situation, and that it would be in their best interest to render a multi-faceted policy response to work around governance difficulties such as resources and inefficiencies[13].

In addition to dissemination strategies to promote the dissemination of passed ordinances, it is important to recognize that Ordinance Implementation is found to have excellent reliability (CR = 0.91), which provides evidence of constancy within local government enforcement measures. However, to assess effectiveness, we must assess governance aspects pertaining to stakeholder participation, legal standing of communication, and community buy-in[14]. Therefore, it is important for future research to investigate the relationship between governance challenges and ordinance implementation, perhaps establishing a systematic assessment of actions that can implement certain social change by minimizing the administrative burden of governance challenges that might take away from successful implementation.

This study establishes the importance of a structured dissemination strategy, the persistent nature of governance challenges, and the effectiveness of ordinance implementation in local government. Addressing these three challenges and purposely designing the common product of operational systems will contribute to a more efficient and accountable local government system with engaged constituents.

The assessment of discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion provides insights into the distinctiveness of the constructs measured in this study. According to[15], discriminant validity is established when the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct (diagonal values) is higher than its correlations with other constructs (off-diagonal values).

Table 4. Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion).

Construct	DS	GC	OI
Dissemination Strategies	0.84		
Governance Challenges	0.58	0.83	
Ordinance Implementation	0.63	0.55	0.85

The results presented in Table 4 confirm that Dissemination Strategies (0.84), Governance Challenges (0.83), and Ordinance Implementation (0.85) all exhibit strong discriminant validity, as their square root AVE values exceed their corresponding inter-construct correlations.

The relationships indicated in the correlation values: governances challenges, suggested moderate relationships, which was probably impacted in part by the low number of codes that associated with this construct. The relationships indicated in the correlation values between constructs were characterized by moderate to strong relationships, with dissemination strategies showing the strongest correlation to ordinance implementation (0.63). This means that effective strategies for disseminating documents were directly linked to the success of executing ordinances that had just been implemented. The previous literature supports this assertion by providing evidence that informative and upfront mechanisms for information sharing will facilitate compliance policy, and sometimes enforcement[16], with respect to new ordinances.

Meanwhile governance challenges showed moderate correlations with dissemination strategies (0.58) and ordinance implementation (0.55). This means while governance challenges may inhibit both the dissemination and enforcement of ordinances, they are not completely entangled with these constructs. The distinction supports their conceptual separation in the study. The literature identifies those challenges in governance, such as limited staff and bureaucratic constraints may create delays, while non-implementation of some public health ordinances during an epidemic could be associated with the implementation processes under emergency governance[17]. Working to address governance challenges and working toward greater administrative capacity and engagement of stakeholders in the process could have implications to improve capacity in exiting ordinances.

These findings suggest that coordinated thinking at the local government level is needed. Improved dissemination methods can help improve the implementation of ordinances, but we must also address governance issues to ensure the sustainability of improvements. Decision-makers can pursue strategies that build capacity, develop digital platforms for dissemination of information, and improve the participatory nature of local governmental functions to improve transparency and responsiveness concerning the implementation of the ordinances[18].

Structural Model Evaluation. The structural model evaluation provides crucial insights into the relationships between dissemination strategies, governance challenges, and ordinance implementation. Table 5 presents the hypothesis testing results, showing statistically significant path coefficients for both relationships, reinforcing the impact of dissemination strategies and governance challenges on the implementation of newly enacted ordinances.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing and Path Coefficients.

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient (β)	t-Statistic	p-Value	Result
Dissemination Strategies → Ordinance Implementa- tion	0.42	4.375	0	Signifi- cant
Governance Challenges → Ordinance Implementation	-0.48	-5.853	0	Signifi- cant

The positive path coefficient ($\beta = 0.42$, $t = 4.375$, $p = 0.000$) observed between Dissemination Strategies and Ordinance Implementation indicates that useful dissemination systems enhance the enactment of local ordinances. This result is consistent with previous studies that show effective communication systems (clear, reliable, and timely) positively affect policy implementation and citizen compliance[19]. Furthermore, timely and robust communication of ordinances, engagements through community-driven platforms such as public consultation and digital media, using local spaces to share information such as assemblies, etc. improve implementation outcomes. This emphasizes the importance of expending resources on improved dissemination systems, including digital tools for governance, community engagement, etc., to ensure these ordinances touch on all people who may be affected or interested in specific ordinances[20].

Conversely, the negative path coefficient ($\beta = -0.48$, $t = -5.853$, $p = 0.000$) observed between Governance Challenges and Ordinance Implementation indicates that governance challenges inhibit local governments' effectiveness in enforcing ordinances. This finding is consistent with previous studies in the public administration literature that note how inefficiencies, bureaucratic bottlenecks, paying attention to staff capacity/capability, and political dynamics inhibit local government capacity/capability to institute action[21]. Importantly, the coefficient for Governance Challenges (-0.48) suggests that governance challenges may pose a greater challenge to policy implementation than effective dissemination alone. Therefore, alternatives cannot be generated through dissemination conversation if governance inefficiencies altogether inhibit the effective translation of communicated policies into actions.

Figure 1 presents the PLS-SEM path model, illustrating the relationships between dissemination strategies, governance challenges, and ordinance implementation. The model demonstrates the direct and indirect effects of the identified variables, providing insights into the factors influencing policy execution at the barangay level.

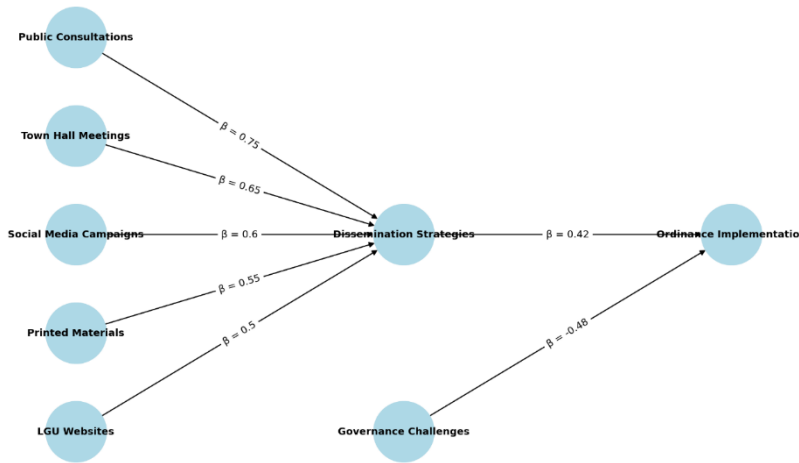


Fig. 1. PLS-SEM Path Model on Ordinance Implementation

Effectiveness of Dissemination Strategies: The research indicates that dissemination strategies that are effective ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.01$) are an important positive influence on ordinance implementation. The strategies employed by LGUs, which include public consultations, campaign-type digital information dissemination, and participatory governance, significantly improve ordinance compliance and understanding among barangay officials and residents. These results support prior research that talks about the importance of transparent communication and stakeholder engagement in policy implementation [22].

Circumstances Challenging Policy Dissemination and Policy Implementation: Factors concerning governance, such as budget constraints, language access, and shortfalls in training ($\beta = -0.48$, $p < 0.01$), negatively affect the effectiveness of implementation. Budget constraints limit LGUs ability to carry out dissemination or outreach; communication barriers (linguistic and literacy) limit access to understanding policies; and deficient capacity-building, training, and educational programs are evident in the lack of capacity for barangay officials to adequately implement ordinances [23]

Indirect Impacts Related to the Conditions of Governance: Findings of the study suggest that if the barriers of dissemination are addressed, it may enhance the positive role of dissemination strategies by an LGU. Interventions such as providing more financial resources to local governments, addressing language and literacy barriers in implementation of ordinances, increasing training programs for barangay officials, or creating informative advocacy campaigns in multiple languages could further close the gap in implementing ordinances.

Table 6 presents the regression analysis results which provide more insight into the elements affecting ordinance implementations. The β coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values show that dissemination strategies and governance barriers have a significant impact on ordinance implementation effectiveness. This finding supports previous research indicating that communication and administrative efficacy affect local governance [24].

Table 6. Regression Analysis on Ordinance Implementation.

Variable	β Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Statistic	p-Value	Sig.
Dissemination Strategies	0.42	0.096	4.375	0	Significant
Governance Challenges	-0.48	0.082	-5.853	0	Significant

The positive β coefficient (0.42, $p = 0.000$) for Dissemination Strategies indicates that an innovative and structured information dissemination strategy had a positive impact on ordinance implementation effectiveness. A t-statistic of 4.375 demonstrates the robustness and statistical significance of the relationship, indicating that when barangay officials communicate the ordinances being enacted, compliance by citizens improves and the execution of the implementation is formalized. Therefore, these effect sizes demonstrate an empirical argument that open communication mechanisms, such as public consultations, digital spaces, and public announcements, help in enforcement of ordinances [25]. It is, thus, important for governments to consider investing in improving these mechanisms and to adopt new technologies to further increase engagement with citizens.

On the other hand, the negative β coefficient (-0.48, $p = 0.000$) for Governance Challenges implies that obstacles such as bureaucratic inefficiencies, limited capacity, and administrative delays create substantial obstacles to enacting the ordinance. The t-statistics (-5.853) also show the strength of this detrimental impact. These findings corroborate the literature on public administration, which contends that governance constraints create bottlenecks that hinder policy implementation [26] and diminish public trust in their local government. In sum, even though we also established that dissemination strategies had an almost linear impact on ordinance implementation (0.42), the fact that governance challenges are a more powerful constraint to ordinances being implemented (-0.48), implies that while good dissemination will bolster ordinance implementation, it will not matter if the governance challenges remain.

3 Conclusions

The study confirms that dissemination strategies are vital for ensuring the effective implementation of ordinances at the local government level. The PLS-SEM analysis demonstrates that community consultation, the use of virtual platforms, and participatory governance methods are central to raising awareness and increasing compliance with policies among barangay officials and community members. Even with these strategies being effective, other governance issues remain and primarily are, but are not limited to, limited budgetary allocations, language differences, limited access to technology, and insufficient training.

Budgetary constraints were the main constraint and prevented local governments from expanding their reach and training efforts. The language and literacy barriers create inequitable access to ordinance information for residents, making it necessary for local governments to adopt more inclusive methods of communication. The lack of a

structured training program for capacity building also inhibits barangay officials from enforcing ordinances effectively and limits their ability to deal with community concerns about policy enforcement.

The regression analysis was also able to show that although dissemination strategies were a positive support to ordinance implementation, the effect of governance challenges was a substantially larger factor. This suggests that while dissemination strategies are important, they must also be supported with adequate institutional mechanisms, financial support, and technical training to ultimately improve effectiveness in enforcing policies. The study illustrates the important role of strategic planning, engagement with multiple stakeholders, and continuous monitoring mechanisms.

In order to improve the outreach and implementation of local government ordinances, LGUs (local government units) should include budget line items for information campaigns, allowing them to have resources for meetings, electronic outreach, written materials, etc. Additionally, seeking alternative funding sources including public-private partnerships and grants from NGOs (non-government organizations), will alleviate financial issues and increase outreach. Alongside this, LGUs should build capacity by continuing to hold regular training workshops and seminars for barangay officials, which should cover items such as legal provisions, enforcement, and engaging with the community. LGUs should also include some aspects of training, which would help them more effectively relay information about the ordinances, including digital literacy, the use of multilingual communications, and conflict resolution.

Given the linguistic landscape and literacy level within communities, LGUs should employ inclusive, multilingual communication methods, including translating local ordinances into local dialect and simplifying legalese language. Additionally, visual aids, infographics, and community radio can also help improve access, especially for low literacy populations. On top of this, LGUs should work to utilize digital formats such as social media, apps, and official government websites to share ordinances more broadly. It will also be useful for LGUs to create a digital interactive space where residents can ask questions, contribute to feedback on ordinances, and/or seek summaries of the ordinances to provide them with increased access to information, and hopefully improve compliance with them.

To make sure that the dissemination strategies yield effective programmatic and policies, LGUs must integrate monitoring and evaluation systems to track the effectiveness of the dissemination methods they use. These might include routine assessments, feedback polling, and participatory governance evaluative approaches to ultimately evaluate and adjust their implementation methods. Building stakeholder collaboration with civil society organizations, academic institutions, and private sector stakeholders can improve trust, transparency, and accountability in governance. These will help LGUs fill in some of the gaps that exist in ordinance dissemination and implementation leading to more effective, inclusive, and sustainable policy implementation. Future research should investigate the long-term effectiveness of digital governance approaches for proposing new digital governance innovations, action guidelines, and comparative studies on many LGUs to develop best practices for policy dissemination and enforcement of local policies.

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