

## The Rising Phenomenon of Insecurity and its Implications for Socio-economic Wellbeing in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Crime and insecurity remain a global challenge especially that they constitute serious threat to life and peaceful co-existence of the people. Nigeria is globally recognised as major player in African affairs primarily due to her rich human and natural resources. However, her national security has been continually bedevilled by numerous issues of crime and insecurity such as kidnapping, banditry, insurgency, civil unrest, armed robbery and terrorism. This unprecedented proliferation in criminal activities has set many panicking and most businesses paralyzed. The study therefore examines Nigeria's rising phenomenon of insecurity and its implications on the socio-economic life of the people. It focuses on the identification of general factors responsible for insecurity in Nigeria; to examine the effects of insecurity on the socio-economic wellbeing of the people; to determine the extent to which people have been victimized of the different forms of crimes; and to proffer viable solutions to guarantee peaceful coexistence among persons living in Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study, where a 14-item structured questionnaire was utilized to elicit relevant information from a total of 204 persons living in Nigeria who constitute the population sample for the study. Three hypotheses were formulated and tested using the chi-square statistical method of data analysis. Findings from the study significantly implicated bad leadership as the main cause of crime proliferation and unstable socioeconomic life among people living in Nigeria. Consequently, among others, the study recommends a deliberate, decisive and concerted effort by all Nigerians with support from the international communities towards instituting credible and reliable leadership personalities and institutions at all levels.

**Keywords:** Crime, Security, Insecurity, Socio-economic, Phenomenon.

### INTRODUCTION

Between 2009 and 2022, Nigeria has witnessed a geometric progression in the wave of crime like never before. For whatever reason(s) criminality proliferated into terrorism and all forms of banditry like kidnapping, murder, burglary, armed robbery, car snatching, and other types of street crimes. These acts of criminality have severely threatened peaceful co-existence and the socioeconomic life of the people. Therefore, given the abundant human and natural resources, it has become pertinent to investigate the causal factors responsible for the geometric upsurge of criminality and crime proliferation in Nigeria. According to Afe, (2016), this spate of criminality has consequently placed the inhabitants of Nigeria in a state of terrible fear of becoming victimized, while the activities of investors and business operatives have also been significantly halted. According to the Global Peace Index (2022), out of 163 nations of the world, Nigeria ranks 143 most troubled nation after Cameroon (142) and next to Colombia (144).

It is almost impossible for anyone living within the confines of Nigeria to discuss social problems inherent in Nigeria without mentioning terrorism, kidnapping, armed robbery, burglary, car snatching, murder and the likes. The state of insecurity in Nigeria has further compounded and worsened the socio-economic wellbeing of its inhabitants. According to the United Nations' Preventive and Mediation Guidelines (2012), any threat to human peace and life can increase human

suffering and may lead to massive economic consequences. The resultant consequences of this recent spate of insecurity in Nigeria have become a misfortune not only to its inhabitants, but also to the Federal Government in her quest to finding lasting solutions to the menace.

In a similar perspective, it is becoming worrisome as the phenomenon of insecurity in Nigeria is persistent as the nation prepares for her 2023 Presidential Elections to determine who becomes her next president after President Muhammadu Buhari. If this rise in criminality remains unchecked, it will serve as a major precipitating factor of voter apathy and a disenfranchisement of eligible voters in the entire election processes. This will in no small measure adversely affect citizens' participation in the electoral process especially at a time which is critical for government's transition. It is against this backdrop that this study examines the spate of insecurity in Nigeria and its socio-economic implications for the inhabitants thereof; with the utmost intension of identifying factors responsible and proffering viable remedies that will stand the test of time.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### The Concept of Insecurity in Nigeria

Security presents an atmosphere where individual and group interests can be pursued without anxiety, panic and uncertainty. Security is more or less the life-wire of any society, without which

there is anxiety and fright, as social actors go about pursuing their individual and group interests. The opposite condition then is insecurity. Tension, fear and uncertainty heighten in direct variation to insecurity as the trend of it heightens as well. Insecurity does not just occur in a vacuum; it occurs as a result of certain societal factors. According to FinIntell, (2016), a business magazine, “The socio-political and economic landscape in Nigeria has been blighted by the endemic twin evil of crime and violence.” The magazine blamed successive governments of Nigeria in its failure to address issues of poverty, unemployment and inequitable distribution of wealth among ethnic nationalities. However, Udoh, (2015) attributed the rising trend of insecurity in the country to other causes such as porous borders, proliferation of arms and ammunition, illegal armed groups, oil bunkering, labour activists, militancy, to mention but a few. Dike, (2005) sees corruption as the cause of insecurity in the country, and corruption remained one of the greatest challenges to security in the country. Adejumo (2011) sees insecurity in Nigeria as sponsored by some foreign powers.

#### ***Insecurity and Socio-economic Life***

Nwogu, (2015) and Adebayo, (2014) conceive peace (security) and development as intimately linked. The socio-economic contributions of citizens to national development are directly proportional to the level of peace in the country. In other words, the level of insecurity in the country adversely affects the socio-economic development of the country. Olukayode and Urhie, (2014) observe that insecurity hampers the socio-economic development of the country, given the rising trend of crime so far. They maintain that available data on the level and dimensions of insecurity in Nigeria reveal an increase over time, which threatens lives and property, hampers business activities and discourages domestic and foreign investors, the entirety of which stifles and retards Nigeria’s socio-economic development. They noted that the rising wave of insecurity in Nigeria has assumed even more dangerous dimensions. Onyepuemu, (2015) writing on insecurity and socio-economic development made reference to a research work done by two researchers. The ripples created by insecurity could lead to an all-round social disorganization. From the foregoing researches carried out by other researchers its almost tempting to conclude that the rising phenomenon of crime in Nigeria has adverse effect on the socio-economic life of the people, but

this would be a rash decision to make if this research venture does not go into the field to either affirm or disaffirm these research findings.

#### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This work anchored its theoretical belief on the Critical Criminological Theory of Crime and Deviance in explaining Nigeria’s situation of insecurity. The stark injustice in the criminal justice system between the power elite and the common man has long been emphasized and criticized by the critical criminologists. A situation where the “big man” in a public office steals billions, ceremonially goes through court and comes out unscathed and a situation where the poor man only steals “akara” (bean cake) and spends several years in jail have caused a certain form of conspiracy among the less-privileged ones against not just the rich who oppress them but even against their own poor brothers and sisters. It is the conspiracy to commit crimes against the very rich who oppress them and against their poor brothers and sisters who sit and watch while they suffer in the hands of the rich. These less-privileged ones who hold society to ransom in this web of crimes are convinced that the power elite (the rich) who make the laws that send them to jail are sinners themselves unworthy of such a noble office of law-making and enforcement. The criminals believe that the laws are made rather to oppress them than made out of consensus. This theory may well explain why the rising phenomenon of crime in Nigeria.

According to Lynch, (2010) critical criminology deals with the inequalities, hierarchies and power differentials in society as causes of crime. As Giddens, (2011) observed, this theory rejects the notion that crimes are caused by anomie, labelling, biological peculiarities and personality, but ties the causes of crime to social inequalities. The thesis of the theory holds that criminal justice administration is so fraught with injustice that, instead of law enforcement officers pursuing white-collar crimes, which are considered more serious, they rather go after morally weak people like prostitutes, drug users, and so on. In the long run, this process of labelling the weak criminals is capable of producing the “self-fulfilling prophecy”. Since they are now seen as criminals in the eyes of society, they have no compunction graduating into real criminals. So, if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences (Thomas, 1923).

#### **METHODOLOGY**

The study employed the survey design to obtain relevant information from the selected respondents. This design was chosen for the study

because it is the most efficient method of systematically collecting and collating data from the respondents for analysis. The survey instrument consisted of close-ended questions, constructed to extract more in-depth information relevant for the study. The research questions were constructed in line with the objectives, beginning with simple themes and progressing to complex issues, to aggravate the curiosity of the respondents and to gradually stimulate question responses. An introductory letter was made to explain reasons behind the survey and its importance, and to further seek the respondents' consent to participate in the research process.

The sample consists of males and females within the age bracket of 18 years and above, who have lived within the confines of Nigeria for a period not less than three years. Age 18 was considered to ensure that the respondent was an adult and should at least be able to make decisions for himself/herself, while the period of three years was assumed to be sufficient enough for the respondents to have familiarized himself/herself with the study area to be able to provide relevant information for the study.

A representative sample of 204 respondents was determined for the study using the Taro Yamane's (1967) formula for sample-size determination thus:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N * (e)^2}$$

Where:

n = the sample size

N = the population size

e = the acceptable sample error (0.07).

The purposive and snowball sampling techniques were adopted for the administration of the study questionnaire. The respondents were selected across the six (6) local government areas (Abaji, Abuja Municipal, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali) that make up for the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The selection of each respondent was based on a non-probability procedure. Several eligible respondents aided the snowballing process. This technique is deemed adequate as the sample selected was based on certain criteria that will fit the purpose of the study and to represent the entire population. The information that was gathered from the survey were analysed using the Statistical Package for the social sciences (SPSS), and the results were presented in simple tables of frequencies and percentages.

## RESULTS

### Data Presentation and Analysis

**Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
18-22	5	2.5
23-27	26	13.0
28-32	45	22.5
33-37	30	15.0
38-42	20	10.0
43-47	14	7.0
48-52	18	9.0
53-57	14	7.0
58-62	11	5.5
63-67	10	5.0
≥68	7	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	85	42.5
Female	115	57.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	179	89.5
Muslim/Islam	15	7.5
Traditional religion	6	3.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	72	36.0
Single	105	52.5
Separated	5	2.5
Widow/widower	10	5.0
Co-habiting	8	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Education</b>		
No formal education	15	7.5
Primary	26	13.0
Secondary	67	33.5
Tertiary	92	46.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Occupation</b>		
Farmer	11	5.5
Trader/business	46	23.0
Civil/public servant	50	25.0
Student	31	15.5
Unemployed	28	14.0
Artisan	16	8.0
Private employment	18	9.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Monthly income</b>		
<N20,000	108	54.0
N20,000-N50,000	52	26.0
>N50,000	40	20.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2022.

Table 1 above shows the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Out of 204 questionnaires that were administered, 200 were retrieved for analysis, representing a response rate of 98.0%. The results obtained in this study showed that most of the respondents (22.5%) were within the age bracket of 28-32 years followed by 15% who were between 33-37 years of age. Male respondents were 85 (42.5%) while females were

115 (57.5%). Majority of the respondents (89.5%) were Christians, 105 (52.5%) singles and 92 (46.0%) had tertiary level of education. In terms of occupation, the respondents were predominantly civil/public servant (25%), traders/business men/women (23.0%) and students (15.5%). Most respondents (54%) were low-income earners while 52 (26%) and 40 (20%) were middle- and high-income earners respectively.

**Table 2:** Respondents' View on Factors Responsible for Increase in Insecurity (N=200)

Variables	Number of Respondents (Percentage)		
	Agree	Disagree	Total
Poverty	176 (88.0)	24 (12.0)	200 (100)
Unemployment/joblessness	189 (94.5)	11 (5.5)	200 (100)
Weak security system	159 (79.5)	41 (20.5)	200 (100)
Political corruption	134 (67.0)	66 (33.0)	200 (100)
Political-based violence	155 (77.5)	45 (22.5)	200 (100)
Exposure to foreign movies	112 (56.0)	88 (44.0)	200 (100)
Illiteracy	120 (60.0)	80 (40.0)	200 (100)
Poor governance	124 (62.0)	76 (38.0)	200 (100)
Religion	96 (48.0)	104 (52.0)	200 (100)
High quest for money	182 (91.0)	18 (9.0)	200 (100)

Source: Field Work, 2017.

Factors responsible for increase in criminal activities in the study area as highlighted by the respondents in Table 2 above were: majorly unemployment/joblessness (94.5%), high quest for

money (91.0%), poverty (88.0%), weak security system (79.5%) and political-based violence (77.5%).

**Table 3a:** Impact of Insecurity on Socio-economic Well-being of Respondents

Variables	Number of Respondents	Percentage
<b>Increase in crime affects socio-economic activities</b>		
Yes	192	96.0
No	8	4.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 3b:** Impact of Insecurity on Socio-economic Well-being of Respondents

Variables	Number of Respondents (Percentage)		
	Agree	Disagree	Total
Reduction in income generating activities	156 (78.0)	44 (22.0)	200 (100)
Increase expenditure on private security	63 (31.5)	137 (68.5)	200 (100)
Relocation of business enterprises	168 (84.0)	32 (16.0)	200 (100)
Migration of people to safe environment	163 (81.5)	37 (18.5)	200 (100)
Disruption of family life	84 (42.0)	116 (58.0)	200 (100)
Reduction in the rate of going out for social functions	51 (25.5)	149 (74.5)	200 (100)
Discourages local & foreign investors	144 (72.0)	56 (28.0)	200 (100)

Source: Fieldwork, 2022.

Table 3a above indicates that a greater proportion (96.0%) of the respondents agreed to the fact that increase crime rates affect their socio-economic activities while 8 (4.0%) respondents stated otherwise. The effect of increase in crime rate on socio-economic activities in the study area as

highlighted by the respondents in Table 3b were mostly relocation of business enterprises (84.0%), migration of people to safe environment (81.5%), reduction in income generating activities (78.0%) and discouragement of local & foreign investors (72.0%).

**Table 4:** Proportion of Respondents who have been Victims of Criminal Activities (N=200)

Types Of Crimes	Number of Respondents (Percentage)		
	Have been a victim	Have not been a victim	Know any family members/friends/colleagues who have been victims
Theft	41 (20.5)	159 (79.5)	48 (24.0)
Armed robbery	28 (14.0)	172 (86.0)	43 (21.5)
Kidnapping	3 (1.5)	197 (98.5)	14 (7.0)
Killing/assassinations	6 (3.0)	194 (97.0)	12 (6.0)
Inter-group violence	16 (8.0)	184 (92.0)	10 (5.0)
Cultism	8 (4.0)	192 (96.0)	17 (8.5)
Rape	2 (1.0)	198 (99.0)	4 (2.0)
Vandalism of properties	15 (7.5)	185 (92.5)	34 (17.0)
	-	-	-

Source: Fieldwork, 2022.

As observed in table 4 above, out of 200 respondents, 41 (20.5%), 28 (14.0%) and 16 (8.0%) respondents reported that they have been victims of theft, armed robbery and inter-group violence respectively, while 48 (24.0%), 43

(21.5%) and 34 (17.0%) respondents admitted that they know family members/friends/colleagues who have been victims of theft, armed robbery and vandalism of properties respectively.



**Table 5:** Respondents' View on Approaches in Curbing Crime Rate in Nigeria

Variables	Number of Respondents (Percentage)		
	Agree	Disagree	Total
Improve security system	156 (78.0)	44 (22.0)	200 (100)
Providing employment	152 (76.0)	48 (24.0)	200 (100)
Good governance/leadership	135 (67.5)	65 (32.5)	200 (100)
Strong community participation in fighting crimes	55 (27.5)	145 (72.5)	200 (100)
Enactment of policies to punish culprits	112 (56.0)	88 (44.0)	200 (100)

Source: Fieldwork, 2022.

As shown in Table 5 below, most respondents suggested that crime rate in Nigeria can be minimized mostly by improving the security

system (78%), providing employment(76%) and enacting policies to punish culprits (67.5%).

**Table 6:** Test of Association between Insecurity and Reduction of Income-generating Activities Using Chi-square Analysis

Variables	Number of Respondents (Percentage)			$\chi^2$	p-value
	Insecurity affects economic activities (N=192)	Insecurity does not affect economic activities (N=8)	Total (N=200)		
Reduction of income generating activities				11.508	.001*
Agree	156 (78.0)	0 (0.0)	156 (78.0)		
Disagree	36 (18.0)	8 (4.0)	44 (22.0)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>192 (96.0)</b>	<b>8 (4.0)</b>	<b>200 (100)</b>		

\*Significant P < 0.05

Source: Fieldwork, 2022.

As shown in Table 6 above, it was observed that increase in insecurity was found to influence reduction of income generating activities ( $\chi^2 = 11.508$ ; P = .001; P < 0.05) and the relationship was statistically significant at 0.05  $\alpha$  level. Hence, the

null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted, which states that the rise in insecurity has substantial effect on income generating activities in Nigeria.

**Table 7:** Test of Association between Insecurity and Relocation of Business Enterprises Using Chi-square Analysis

Variables	Number of Respondents (Percentage)			$\chi^2$	p-value
	Insecurity affects economic activities (N=192)	Insecurity does not affect economic activities (N=8)	Total (N=200)		
Relocation of business enterprises				24.346	.000*
Agree	168 (84.0)	0 (0.0)	168 (84.0)		
Disagree	24 (12.0)	8 (4.0)	32 (16.0)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>192 (96.0)</b>	<b>8 (4.0)</b>	<b>200 (100)</b>		

\*Significant P < 0.05

Source: Fieldwork, 2022.

As shown in Table 7 above, it was observed that increase in insecurity was found to influence the relocation of business enterprises ( $\chi^2 = 24.346$ ; P = .000; P < 0.05) and the relationship was statistically significant at 0.05  $\alpha$  level. Hence, the null

hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted, which states that the rise in insecurity has substantial effect on relocation of business enterprises in Nigeria.

**Table 8:** Test of Association between Insecurity and Migration of People to Safe Environment Using Chi-square Analysis

Variables	Number of Respondents (Percentage)			$\chi^2$	P-value
	Insecurity affects economic activities (N=192)	Insecurity does not affect economic activities (N=8)	Total (N=200)		
Migration of people to safe environment				18.122	.000*
Agree	163 (81.6)	0 (0.0)	163 (81.6)		
Disagree	29 (14.5)	8 (4.0)	37 (18.5)		
<b>Total</b>	<b>192 (96.0)</b>	<b>8 (4.0)</b>	<b>200 (100)</b>		

\*Significant P&lt;0.05

Source: Fieldwork, 2022.

As shown in Table 8 above, it was observed that increase in insecurity was found to influence the migration of people to safe environment ( $\chi^2=18.122$ ;  $P=.000$ ;  $P<0.05$ ) and the relationship was statistically significant at 0.05  $\alpha$  level. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative accepted, which states that the rise in insecurity has substantial effect on the safety of people residing in Nigeria.

## DISCUSSIONS

Factors responsible for increase in criminal activities as indicated in the study were predominantly unemployment/joblessness (94.5%), high quest for money (91.0%), poverty (88.0%), weak security system (79.5%) and political-based violence (77.5%). This finding corroborates Ewetan & Urhie, (2014) and Udoh, (2015) conclusions that ethno-religious conflicts, political-based violence, unemployment, poverty, inequalities and unfairness, weak security system, organized violent group, poor governance/political corruption, porous borders and terrorism were the causes of insecurity in Nigeria. As highlighted in the study, unemployment is a major issue in Nigeria. This is because Nigeria's unemployment rate has increased from 10.4% in the fourth quarter of 2015 to 33% in the fourth quarter of 2022, (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022.) Due to the above fact, many unemployed young people tend to engage in various criminal activities to make ends meet. The situation is same for graduates who have no jobs and no steady source of income. In fact, unemployment can be seen as a major gateway to indulging in other crimes such as political thuggery, armed robbery, kidnapping, organized group violence and terrorism. This is because people who are busy with their work may have less time to engage in criminal activities as

compared with the jobless individuals who are more vulnerable to criminal initiation. Adebayo, (2013) in his study confirmed that youth unemployment is a major contributor to the slow pace of development in Nigeria. This may be attributed to the fact that they constitute the majority of the active working force of the country. Another major factor that is responsible for the rise in insecurity is the high quest of money. This factor is a typical characteristics usually exhibited by the youths in most contemporary society. The quest of some young people to be like their mates who are wealthy and their desire to be at the upper echelon of the society for the sole purpose of recognition, affluence and power has driven them to engage in crime for money. Poverty was recognized as a major cause of the rise in insecurity in the study area. This may be attributed to the fact that most Nigerian still live below the poverty line and poverty in itself has been a major factor responsible for increase rates of conflicts, wars, crimes and industrial action in Nigeria. The weak security system is also a major cause of increase in crime rates. This is because the increased wave of crime outweighs the current workforce of crime fighters. This explains the reason for the regular recruitments taking place across all security agencies in the country. Lack of sufficient and sophisticated equipment and facilities to fight crime could be another factor militating against security.

In the current study it was noted that a greater proportion (96.0%) of the respondents agreed to the fact that increased crime ratenegatively affects socio-economic activities, and the effect of increased crime rate on socio-economic activities highlighted were mostly relocation of business

enterprises (84.0%), migration of people to safe environment (81.5%), reduction in income generating activities (78.0%), and discouragement of local & foreign investors (72.0%). These findings are in consonance with the positions of Ering, (2011); Ewetan&Urhie, (2014), Udoh, (2015); Okonkwo, et al., (2015) and Shalangwa, (2013) where insecurity was substantially found to negatively affect the socio-economic wellbeing of individuals and countries. Obviously, the threat of insecurity in any given society poses great danger to its economy. In Nigeria, most occupants are civil servants, businessmen or women, petty traders, artisans and students who constitute a greater percentage of the hub of economic and social activities. Where insecurity persists, these people find it difficult to carry out their legitimate activities. Also, local and foreign investor may withdraw their interest from establishing industries and as such leave a large number of the active populations unemployed. In other cases, individuals and families migrate from place to place in search of safety and peaceful environment. Consequently, this rising phenomenon brings about a disruption in family life as a whole.

Out of 200 respondents, 41 (20.5%), 28 (14.0%) and 16 (8.0%) respondents reported that they have been victims of theft, armed robbery and inter-group violence respectively, while 48 (24.0%), 43 (21.5%) and 34 (17.0%) respondents admitted that they know family members/friends/colleagues who have been victims of theft, armed robbery and vandalism of properties respectively. This finding is in agreement with that of Ngwama (2014) where kidnapping was upheld as a major crime threatening the safety of people. As a result of these crimes, people have lost their lives, properties and income base. In some cases, they spend the little money they have to pay for ransom (in the case of kidnapping), treat themselves if they were injured in the process or replace properties that were stolen or vandalized. This rising phenomenon has economically disadvantaged residents in Nigeria.

## CONCLUSION

The level of insecurity in Nigeria is generally on the increase. In order to stem down this phenomenon, all hands must be on deck, both from the government and the inhabitants. In order to tackle this rising insecurity situation in Nigeria, a holistic approach to the fight against insecurity

must be adopted. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. There must be deliberate, decisive and concerted efforts by all well meaning Nigerians towards instituting credible persons and institutions of leadership at all levels.
- ii. Government should improve on the security systems and strategies. This can be achieved by increase in numerical strength of the security workforce, provision of adequate and sophisticated equipment to tackle insecurity.
- iii. Both government and private sectors should make conscious efforts towards job creation and the provision of an enabling business environment. Job creation is a major strategy of curbing criminality. This is because, if people are engaged in lucrative ventures, crime rates would practically diminish. An idle mind, they say, is the Devil's workshop.
- iv. The criminal justice system should ensure that appropriate sanctions are meted on culprits in order to serve as deterrent and discouragement from crimes such as kidnapping, rape, and so on.
- v. The Nigeria Correctional Services should provide adequate facilities for the rehabilitation of convicted offenders for proper reintegration into the society when they are finally released.
- vi. Proactive security patrols and surveillance should be undertaken by security agencies to help prevent crime before they ever occur.

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