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Overview on South-South Migration and Development in Lesotho

TRENDS AND RESEARCH NEEDS

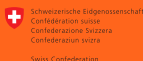
Country Overview

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ACP Observatory on Migration

The ACP Observatory on Migration is an initiative of the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, funded by the European Union, implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in a Consortium with 15 partners and with the financial support of Switzerland, IOM, the IOM Development Fund and UNFPA. Established in 2010, the ACP Observatory is an institution designed to produce data on South–South ACP migration for migrants, civil society and policymakers and enhance research capacities in ACP countries for the improvement of the situation of migrants and the strengthening of the migration–development nexus.

The Observatory was established to facilitate the creation of a network of research institutions and experts on migration research. Activities are starting in 12 pilot countries and will be progressively extended to other interested ACP countries. The 12 pilot countries are: Angola, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Kenya, Lesotho, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United Republic of Tanzania.

The Observatory has launched research and capacity-building activities on South–South migration and development issues. Through these activities, the ACP Observatory aims to address many issues that are becoming increasingly important for the ACP Group as part of the migration–development nexus. Documents and other research outputs and capacity-building manuals can be accessed and downloaded free of charge through the Observatory's website (www.acpmigration-obs.org). Other upcoming publications and information on the Observatory's activities will be posted online.

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***Overview on South-South Migration
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Trends and Research Needs

Introduction

The Kingdom of Lesotho (Lesotho hereafter) has a unique and long migration history linked to its position of entirely being surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. It is one of the smallest Landlocked Developing Countries. For 150 years and until today, emigration mainly to South Africa has been a significant livelihood strategy in Lesotho, as recognized in Lesotho's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper of 2004/2005 to 2006/2007 (Kingdom of Lesotho, nd). Poverty and the lack of opportunities at home has led many citizens of Lesotho to migrate internally and to neighbouring South Africa, with implications for social nets and family structures. Remittances made up 25 per cent of the GDP in 2009 (World Bank, 2010a). Consequently, the country is among the top three remittance-receiving countries as a share of GDP worldwide, making remittances an important source of foreign exchange and to pay for basic necessities.

Over the past 20 years, migration patterns from and in Lesotho have changed considerably, with work opportunities for men in the mines in South Africa decreasing and at the same time increasing female emigration from Lesotho. Internal migration has become more important for women working in the garment factories and child mobility linked to the spread of HIV/AIDS in Lesotho. The prevalence of HIV/AIDS is both a cause and effect of human mobility from and within Lesotho, with significant repercussions on human development.

This synopsis aims to provide data and information on main migration and development trends in Lesotho with a view to highlighting data, research and capacity-building needs. The identification of these limitations will help to propose possible research angles for the work of the ACP Observatory on Migration in terms of research actions and training in migration data collection and analysis in Lesotho.

I. Context: Data and key migration and development trends

Concerning migration and development in Lesotho, there is an abundance of in-depth studies, in particular undertaken by the Southern African Migration Programme (SAMP) and international agencies. Several studies have also looked at the characteristics of migrants beyond statistical analysis, including qualitative assessments. Data on emigration figures is only available for South Africa as the main destination country, highlighting the need for up-to-date and comprehensive information on the different aspects of migration.

1.1 Population and immigration

Despite the small number of immigrants that Lesotho hosts, it is one of the few countries who have ratified the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and the Members of their Families (1990).¹ This shows the proactive stance on safeguarding the rights of mobile populations. The stock of international immigrants in Lesotho is estimated at 6,328 in 2010, according to the Population Division of the United Nations' Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN PD, 2009). This number has decreased by almost 2,000 immigrants over the past 20 years (UN PD, 2009), which can possibly be linked to the political changes in South Africa and resulting return migration of South Africans who lived in or sought refuge in Lesotho. In addition, Official Development Aid dropped after 1994 (World Bank, 2010b), which led to fewer expatriates working in the country.

According to the population projections of the Bureau of Statistics of Lesotho (2010), the total population is projected to reach 1.89 million in 2010. The 6,328 international migrants in Lesotho would then represent 0.33 per cent of the total population, which is lower than the global share of the international migrant stock of 3.1 per cent of the world's population (UN PD, 2009).

Main origin country for immigrants is South Africa, and also includes migrants from Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Botswana, Zambia, Swaziland, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia and Angola (World Bank, 2010a). Yet other sources indicate a considerable presence of ethnic Chinese migrant workers in Lesotho, which were estimated at about 5,000 Chinese nationals from Taiwan and mainland China (Cobbe, 2004). This South-South migration phenomenon could be looked at in more detail in future studies.

Broken down by sex, the share of female migrants has been decreasing, albeit slightly, over recent years from 45.9 per cent in 2000 to 45.5 per cent in 2010. In absolute numbers, women among immigrants have increased by 45 from 2,832 to 2,877 in 2010 (UN PD, 2009). Despite being small in numbers, more needs to be known about the different experiences and impacts of migration on men and women who immigrated to Lesotho.

As concerns urbanization, the majority of Lesotho's population still lives in the countryside. According to the Bureau of Statistics of Lesotho (2010), in 2006, 77 per cent of the population lived in rural areas. This figure is believed to have decreased to 75 per cent in 2010. In comparison, the Population Division of the

1 In 2005, see http://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-13&chapter=4&lang=en.

United Nations estimated the rate of urbanization to be about four percentage points higher for 2010. According to their data, which is based on information communicated by the respective national statistics bureaus, more than one out of four inhabitants (26.9%) is estimated to live in urban areas in 2010, similar to that of all Least Developed Countries (29.2%), yet 10 percentage points below the average in sub-Saharan Africa (37.2%) and significantly lower than in the region of southern Africa (58.7%; UN PD, 2009). Within the next decade, the percentage of the population living in urban areas is believed to increase to about one third of the total population (34.5%; UN PD, 2009). The Bureau of Statistics projected it to reach 28.7 per cent by 2020. Towns on the border to South Africa are flourishing due to cross-border trade and most migrants are believed to reside in the capital on the border, Maseru (van Blerk and Ansell, 2006).

Overall migration trends have changed significantly since 1990. In particular internal rural-urban movements have increased, both by female migrants moving within Lesotho and internal migration related to care-giving and other consequences of the HIV/AIDS epidemic (Crush et al., 2010). Thus the spread of HIV/AIDS has affected migration patterns.

Intra-regional migration from and to Lesotho are both a cause and effect of the spread of HIV/AIDS. Human mobility increases risky behaviour and vulnerability to infection with the disease, while the disease can lead to further migration of family members staying behind or having to take care of the affected. In addition, migrants may return home when they are too sick to continue working (SAMP, 2002; UN-INSTRAW and UNDP, 2010).

Rural – urban movements in Lesotho are linked to both the increasing importance of the garment industry and the relocation of children and others to take care of family members who suffer from HIV/AIDS. From 15,000 workers in 1998 just after the crisis (Salm et al., 2002), employment in the garment factories rose to 50,000 in 2004 (UN-INSTRAW and UNDP, 2010). Over 40,000 mainly young women coming from rural areas are internal migrants working in the textile factories in cities and industrial estates (Crush et al., 2010; IOM, nd). A study by Salm and others from 2002 revealed that HIV/AIDS is posing a considerable challenge for the workforce of the industry through workers being unable to continue their job and the high mortality rate among them. This also has repercussions for the productivity of the workers.

Policy has responded to these challenges. The National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan 2006–2011 recognizes rural-urban mobility as a contributing factor to the

spread of HIV/AIDS as well as the highly vulnerable, often marginalized position of migrant populations, facing a lack of access to information and services (IOM, nd).

1.2 Emigration

According to the Global Migrant Origin Database of the Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty of the University of Sussex (Migration DRC, 2007), in 2005, 50,967 persons had emigrated from Lesotho. Ratha and Shaw (2007) of the World Bank estimated the number at almost 260,000 for the same year, indicating a discrepancy of more than 200,000 albeit using the same sources (censuses and own estimations).² The latest World Bank figures (2010a) indicate that the stock of emigrants from Lesotho reached 427,500 in 2010, representing an estimate which is almost 10 times higher than that of the Migration DRC database for 2005. According to the World Bank, 20.5 per cent or every fifth person lived outside the country in 2010. By destination, Ratha and Shaw estimate that almost 26,000 citizens of Lesotho emigrated to Mozambique (equaling 10% of emigrants) and more than 208,000 to South Africa (four out of five emigrants or 80.5%), while only 368 and 354 live in the United Kingdom and the United States respectively. These figures underline the importance of South Africa as the main destination for emigrants from Lesotho and South-South migration in general, accounting for 98.7 per cent of destinations in 2005. The World Bank (2010a) lists South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Australia and Switzerland as the main destination countries for emigrants from Lesotho.

According to 2006 census data of the Bureau of Statistics of Lesotho (2010), the annual net migration rate was -6.15 in 2006 and estimated to be -5.98 per 1,000 inhabitants in 2011. The total annual net number of international migrant stocks was assumed to decrease by 10 per cent between 2006 and 2011 and to fall further by 30 per cent between 2006 and 2026.

Over the past 20 years, emigration trends have diversified considerably from mostly male workers leaving to work in the gold mines in South Africa. Cross-border mobility has grown significantly, from 244,000 recorded crossings in 1991 to 2.2 million in 2008 (Statistics South Africa, cited in Crush et al., 2010).³

2 This could also relate to the fact of different definitions of migrants used, i.e. by country of birth or citizenship or both.

3 This number refers to crossings, not individuals as they often pass the border several times a year.

The Department of Home Affairs of South Africa estimates border crossings with Lesotho at about 28,000 people per day (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, nd).

Broken down by sex, 16 per cent of emigrants are women and 84 per cent men (UN-INSTRAW and UNDP, 2010). This highlights that external mobility remains a predominantly male phenomenon of workers employed in neighbouring South Africa, with diversification to include construction, farm work and the transportation sector as occupational sectors for migrant workers (van Blerk and Ansell, 2006; IOM, 2007, UN-INSTRAW and UNDP, 2010).

Nonetheless, an increasing trend of feminization of emigration from Lesotho is being observed through the increase of female emigrants in absolute and relative terms as well as the type of migration they engage in. This has been facilitated by the change in the immigration regime in South Africa with the end of apartheid that previously barred women from immigrating. Nonetheless, most are employed in menial and badly paid positions such as the domestic and informal sectors, farming and informal trade and production and often irregularly (Makhema, 2009; Crush et al., 2010). Concerning the type of migration, the majority of women (51%) move to South Africa for economic reasons and are from a household of extended family (parents, uncle or aunt is the household head). Almost one out of five (18%) leave Lesotho because their husbands are unemployed as a consequence of the decline in employment in the mining section, diseases, including tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, or disability; and one out of four (24%) move as heads of households. This underlines the consequences of diseases and unemployment as driving further migration. Female emigration to South Africa is believed to having been considerably higher if the textile industry in Lesotho would not have grown as much over the past decade (UN-INSTRAW and UNDP, 2010).

Despite still being lower than that of men, wages in South Africa are higher for women than in Lesotho. In addition, gender roles have changed and many women are providing the main income or only income for families as heads of households. However, despite this changing role in households, women still face discrimination based on gender and infringements of their political and socio-economic rights (UN-INSTRAW and UNDP, 2010). Traditionally women have to follow the will of the families, which are mostly organized in a patriarchal way and prefer that women stay at home (Makhema, 2009).

1.3 Labour migration

Over the last century, legal emigration to neighbouring South Africa mostly consisted of men working in the gold mines across the border. Migration was such a widespread phenomenon that as many as almost half of all Basotho⁴ households witnessed a member working abroad in the mines in the late 1970s. As contracts expired, these workers had no legal right to stay in South Africa during the apartheid era and family reunification was not allowed either. Interestingly, in 1974 a law was passed in Lesotho (the Lesotho Deferred Pay Act, Act. No. 18), creating a mandatory remittance transfer system to Lesotho. This has possibly laid the ground for the dependence of Lesotho on remittances as a source of income, livelihood and foreign exchange.

Due to the end of apartheid, a decrease in the gold price in the 1990s with subsequent closures and cut-backs in the mining industry and stricter immigration policies in South Africa, job opportunities for male workers from Lesotho in the mines across the border have decreased considerably. According to data by TEBA, the major South African mine recruiting company, the employment of Basotho workers in South African mines plummeted from an estimated 127,000 in 1990 to 48,000 in 2005 (cited in Crush et al., 2010). The Lesotho Bureau of Statistics (nd) estimates this number at 52,450 in 2005, which is slightly higher. It is drawn from the 2005 Labour Statistics Report and also includes workers on leave periods and affected by accidents, among others. This decline in employment has important repercussions for migration trends and livelihood strategies of the families back in Lesotho that used to rely on predominantly male mine workers in South Africa.

In addition to the greater participation of women in migration, skilled emigration from Lesotho is believed to have grown, which is so far not supported by evidence. In 2005, 10 per cent of those surveyed by SAMP were working in professions requiring higher education (Crush et al., 2010). In 2000, the fraction of physicians born in Lesotho and having left was estimated at 33 per cent by Clemens and Petersson (2007). However, the absolute number of 57 physicians born in Lesotho highlights the relatively small human resource base in Lesotho, in particular of the highly skilled. 3 per cent or 36 nurses born in Lesotho resided abroad in 2000. More recent data is needed on other trained professionals, such as teachers and university lecturers to be able to provide a realistic picture of the scope of emigration by type of professionals from Lesotho.

⁴ The dominant ethnic group in Lesotho comprises the Basotho.

The rise of the textile industry and manufacturing in Lesotho can be linked to investors from Taiwan, Province of China. In addition to FDI they also brought in skilled labourers and managers from China. Labour migrants of Chinese origin also engage in retail trade in both urban and rural areas as well as in construction work (Cobbe, 2004).

As poverty and unemployment remain major push factors for emigration, a long-term human resource strategy to build a skills base seems important to address. This strategy can be complemented by engaging diasporas who have left Lesotho, but cannot be the solution for development in Lesotho. Policy responses are needed in particular in light of the majority of the population being 24 years and younger (61.8%, UN PD, 2008) as well as the likely effects of the global economic and financial crises on remittance flows and other aspects of the links between migration and development.

1.4. Irregular migration

Irregular migration seems to be an increasing trend for migrants residing in South Africa (Crush, 2008). The lack of economic opportunities and possibilities for lower skilled workers to find employment in South African has led to more irregular migrant workers in less regulated sectors such as agriculture and domestic services (Crush et al., 2010). Undocumented migration to South Africa has a long history and is hard to measure (Cobbe, 2004). Up-to-date information should be collected on this trend, which often proves to be difficult.

One way to address irregular flows is the enhancement of legal migration channels. Given the unique geographical position of Lesotho being entirely surrounded by South Africa, a bilateral draft agreement on the Facilitation of Cross Border Movement of Citizens of the Republic of South Africa and the Kingdom of Lesotho is under review for ratification by both governments and was signed in 2007 (Crush et al., 2010).

Trafficking in persons is occurring from Lesotho to the southern African region. Children from rural areas in Lesotho move to Maseru in light of domestic violence or as a consequence of HIV/AIDS in the family. A report by IOM (2003) indicates that they are forced to move to border towns and asparagus farms in the Eastern Free State in South Africa. There they often face sexual exploitation and are being sent back on their own. Trafficking of children from Maseru has also occurred through long-distance truck drivers for sex work along the way to Cape Town, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Women from Lesotho are also trafficked for sex work in Johannesburg (IOM, 2006).

The protection of irregular migrants and migrant workers and their families always presents a challenge that needs to be tackled, in particular during times of crisis and rising xenophobia as witnessed in recent years in neighbouring South Africa.

1.5 Remittance flows from and to Lesotho

Remittance flows to Lesotho reached USD 450 million in 2009 and are expected to surpass half a billion USD in 2010 (USD 525 million; World Bank, 2010a). Although being small in absolute numbers when compared to other countries, they represent a key source of foreign exchange and a lifeline to the poor. As part of GDP in 2009, migrant workers' transfers accounted for a quarter of the total amount (World Bank, 2010a). This means that every fourth dollar generated by the economy was due to emigrants' transfers to their origin country. Considering that in a 2005 survey by SAMP (cited in Crush et al., 2010) the overwhelming majority of remittances were transferred through informal channels, such as being carried by migrants themselves or co-workers and friends, this number is likely to be considerably higher. Only two per cent of emigrants used banks and 5 per cent the post office to send money home. Furthermore, high transfer costs, double taxation and corruption (UN-INSTRAW and UNDP, 2010) impede the use of regular channels for remittance transfers and the full development impact of these transfers. An assessment of the existing policy frameworks and tools to remit money is needed to make recommendations on how to enhance South-South transfers.

In 2008, net Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) reached USD 200 million. Net Official Development Assistance (ODA) reached USD 100 million in 2008a. Having reached USD 439 million in 2008, remittances largely outnumber FDI and ODA and were larger than the other two official flows combined. This highlights the crucial role of remittances as a lifeline for the majority in Lesotho, who are not reached by official aid flows or investment.

Remittance patterns vary between men and women. Female domestic workers in South Africa send fewer funds to their families than men working in mines, which is closely linked to their considerably lower income (one third of male miners). Men with another family or partner in South Africa tend to remit less, while women in this position transfer more, probably due to a share of their partner's wage as well (Crush et al., 2010). These gender aspects of migration also influence the development impact of remittances.

As can be expected from the small figure of international immigrants, remittance outflows from Lesotho to other countries only reached USD 13 million in 2009. These outflows have decreased considerably since a peak from 1995, when they reached USD 75 million (World Bank, 2010a). The high outflow in the last years of the 1990s could be linked to decreasing immigration from South Africa due to the end of the apartheid in 1994. No data exists for the period prior to 1994.

1.6 Environmentally induced migration

A study by van Blerk and Ansell (2006) indicates that internal and international migration is also a response to environmental degradation, such as soil erosion. More needs to be known about the complex interrelationships between the environment, climate change exacerbating environmental degradation and migration in Lesotho.

1.7 Other key migration trends: Child migration

Human mobility in the region of southern Africa often takes the form of intra-household migration as households are stretched out. Members are not only those living in the same house, but extend to wider kinship networks in both urban and rural areas, sharing basic necessities such as food. The HIV/AIDS pandemic affects care taking obligations among household members residing in different parts of the country. It often involves children moving to help and/or stay with extended family members when affected by AIDS or having become orphans, to attend school or earn a living (van Blerk and Ansell, 2006). In addition and as mentioned before, they are also vulnerable to trafficking in persons.

Migration of children in general and between households of the wider family seems to not have received much attention so far in research and policy responses. A notable exception is the study by van Blerk and Ansell (2006) that finds that most children regard it as a matter of the household moving than an individual process. In particular due to representing a large share of the population (38.5% are between 0 and 14 years old; UN PD, 2008), more research is needed to inform policy on the needs and experiences of children which cannot easily be assumed to be similar to those of adults (van Blerk and Ansell, 2006).

2. The impact of migration on human development

A recent study by the Southern African Migration Programme (Crush et al., 2010) has shown that the development potential of remittances sent to Lesotho seems to be rather limited. Most funds received are spent on basic necessities, such as food (90% of households surveyed), clothes (76%), education (56%) and transportation (34%). While representing important contributions to realizing the human rights to food, water, education, etc., this high degree of dependence on remittances leaves little possibility to invest it in income-generating activities.

Only a few households have enough income to invest remittances in income-generating activities, such as agriculture (25%) or small-scale businesses. Almost one out of five use remittances to save money (19%). Other costs covered, such as funerals (16%) and insurance for funerals and burial ceremonies (29%) highlight the far-reaching effects of HIV and AIDS, also in economic terms. In addition, the business environment in Lesotho does not favour the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises (Crush et al., 2010), highlighting the need for an enabling environment to make migration work for development. A review of existing measures and recommendations on how to decrease transfer costs and support entrepreneurship and other income-generating activities needs to be undertaken.

For a number of households in Lesotho, transfers by migrants are the most important or only source of income. Although being an important poverty reduction function, it also increases the need for these flows to continue for survival. Rising inequality is a further outcome of the remittance dependency. Over the years the number of households receiving remittances has decreased, with negative consequences for those who do not have a family member working in a mine and being paid a relatively high wage (Crush et al., 2010).

Negative impacts are particularly felt among households where a female family member/head of household is abroad. 38 per cent indicated the effect of migration as negative or very negative, compared to 27 per cent of male migrant-sending households. As female sending-households tend to be poorer than those where a man emigrated, this social impact is particularly important (Crush et al., 2010). Despite the importance of remittances for poverty alleviation, it also entails social costs for those staying behind. Family and social structures and support mechanisms are disconnected. Furthermore, mobility increases the likelihood to be exposed to HIV, for both migrants and their families, which in turn can make migration a necessity (IOM, 2007).

3. Recommendations: Possible research and capacity-building priorities

The analysis has shown that the migration and development context in Lesotho is inextricably linked to mobility to the neighbouring country and the effects of the spread of HIV/AIDS. Several potential areas where capacity-building and research activities seem to be needed are highlighted below for discussion.

Capacity-building is needed to process existing data and where gaps exist, to collect and harmonize new information. The next household survey could include additional questions related to immigration and emigration, disaggregated by age, sex, profession etc. To further facilitate the implementation of the Free Movement Protocol among the countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the ACP Observatory on Migration could facilitate trainings on best practices and lessons learned in other regions, such as ECOWAS in West Africa, CARICOM in the Caribbean and Schengen in the European Union.

The potential of reaching out to the diasporas from Lesotho is an area that could be supported by research by the ACP Observatory on Migration. **Mapping the Basotho diasporas in ACP countries** could help to gauge their interest and possibilities to transfer skills, knowledge and technology and to move beyond the focus on financial remittances to also include other aspects, such as social remittances. Possible investment projects, including in agriculture, for diaspora bonds could also be explored as part of this research. In addition, diaspora members could support the design of a long-term human resource strategy to increase the skills base and to ensure the ability to deliver public services despite the HIV/AIDS and emigration challenges. Engagement could include virtual counseling and supporting the higher education and health sectors.

Furthermore, **a feasibility study to enhance South-South remittances through policies and programmes** can be explored. Most money transfers by migrants are believed to be informal. This can be attributed to high transfer costs, but also a lack of access to bank accounts and other formal financial services. Recommendations will be made on how the potential multiplier effects of remittances can be supported through an enabling policy environment.

An **assessment of the effectiveness of the migration legislation** in Lesotho can help to make the necessary adjustments to current realities and challenges. This will include the exploration of the feasibility of enhancing labour mobility of lower skilled migrants through legal channels, given that they are the majority of emigrants from Lesotho. Promoting labour mobility to and from South Africa could provide an important triple win situation for migrants,

the country of origin and destination. The study can cover the protection of workers as well as the portability of social and health benefits as Lesotho faces considerable service provision burdens of returned migrants who have contracted HIV and returned home to receive medical care. Circular labour migration schemes could be promoted in the region, inter alia, based on the bilateral cooperation agreements already signed between South Africa and Lesotho or the Free Movement Protocol under SADC that both countries have ratified, yet extending to labour migration, right to establishment, etc.

As has been highlighted, **internal and cross-border child migration** is under-researched and should be focused on. In particular the effects of mobility on their human development need to be studied to inform measures to counter the potentially negative impact. **Migration and health** is a further important area for research on migration and development in Lesotho. In particular the vulnerability of migrants to HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis and the difficulties experienced by migrants with HIV in accessing antiretroviral treatment.

To foster a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the migration phenomenon, the **development of a migration profile** as prepared by the International Organization for Migration on some Central and Western African countries could be discussed.

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