

How the Society of Taiwan Discriminates Against Women?

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Abstract

From the Internet we can see that women's rights in Taiwan are currently ranked first in Asia and ranked fourth in the world. Although this indicates the status of women in Taiwan is improving, the result of the satisfaction with life shows that women's life seems imperfect. This paper aims to find out the truth about how Taiwanese society discriminates against women. There are three sections in this paper, which include how the patriarchal system affects people, discrimination in the workplace, and the status of women in the family. Investigating these phenomena will help us to find answers.

Introduction

“A woman deserves equal pay for equal work. She deserves to have a baby without sacrificing her job. A mother deserves a day off to care for a sick child or sick parent without running into hardship – and you know what, a father does, too. Its time to do away with workplace policies that belong in a ‘Mad Men’ episode.” The ex-president of America Barack Hussein Obama who said these words and led him to had more supporters in 2016. In recent years, Taiwan start to pay attention to ensure gender equality in society and improve women’s living conditions, such as in 2011, they announced the Enforcement Act of Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and requested that all government units adopt necessary and so forth. Although, in comparison with the past, feminist awareness and the system of gender equality in Taiwan have indeed progressed, but they still have many problems should be solving. For instance, in a normal family, women always do more housework than men, and in workplace man always have a promotion easier than women because men do not take parental leave, so they won’t affect company’s operation and so on. However, for these kinds of problem are commend to happen in Taiwan although the government is trying to modify the policy, but they do not realize the root of the problem. Since long time ago, the patriarchal system has been the most controversial argument in Taiwan, and now it is still exiting in anywhere. It is time for us to speak for women’s right, the problem under the patriarchal system should be solved.

Literature Review

Recourses discovery and the Internet

“The Democratic Progressive Party is very pleased to cooperate with the Asian Liberal Democratic Union to show everyone that Taiwan is defending the progress of freedom and democracy. After we were lifted 30 years ago, there has been great progress in seeing human rights, women's rights, and female political participation.” (Tsai Ing-wen, 2017)

This paragraph points out the status of woman in Taiwan is being enlightened, and the government is not only paying more attention to women's rights, but also modifying policies to protect women. For example, “Mothers and fathers now have equal rights towards their children.” (*Chapter II- Marriage of the Civil Code Articles 972 - 1058*). Women's rights also are protected in the Constitution of Taiwan. Article 7 states: “*All citizens of the Republic of China, irrespective of sex, religion, race, class, or party affiliation, shall be equal before the law*”. The Additional Article 10, section 6 reads: “*The State shall protect the dignity of women, safeguard their personal safety, eliminate sexual discrimination, and further substantive gender equality.*” To ensure women's rights in the workforce, the government enacted the “Act of Gender Equality in Employment”. In brief, women's rights in Taiwan have been paid more attention, and women's lives seem to be happier than in the past century.

What is the truth about women's right in Taiwan?

“A married daughter is like water thrown out,” is an old Chinese proverb. It is a notion held by many Taiwanese, especially the older generation, and a notion espoused by the patriarchal system. In Taiwan, society valued men so much that even the Civil Code promulgated in 1929 favored men, requiring that women adopt their husband's surname after marriage, and live in the husband's place of residence. It definitely proves how the patriarchal system discriminates against women. In addition to sexual harassment and violence, discrimination against women in the work place was rampant in the 1980s as demonstrated in clauses implemented by banks, airline companies and government-affiliated cultural centers, requiring women to be single and not become pregnant. “These clauses obliged women to quit their jobs once they were married or pregnant,” “They were introduced because employers worried females would not be able to concentrate on their work once they gave birth.” Said by the Taipei-based National Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall led women's groups. This not only happened in 1980s, it is still true today. From our society, we can see that women do more housework than men, even when they both have job. Additionally in some families, they even think taking care of the baby is the mother's duty.

Although women's status in Taiwan has improved over the decades, equal partnership for women and men in all aspects of social life remains a goal to work towards. We also need more quantitative and qualitative research to explore the relationship between family life and marriage in Taiwan. More

specifically, how do different classes, ethnic groups, and even sexually oriented families develop different strategies to negotiate family division and partnership? The answer is people should learn to listen to each other with an open mind and treat others with a broadened mind.

Chap I

How the Patriarchal System Affects Our Life?

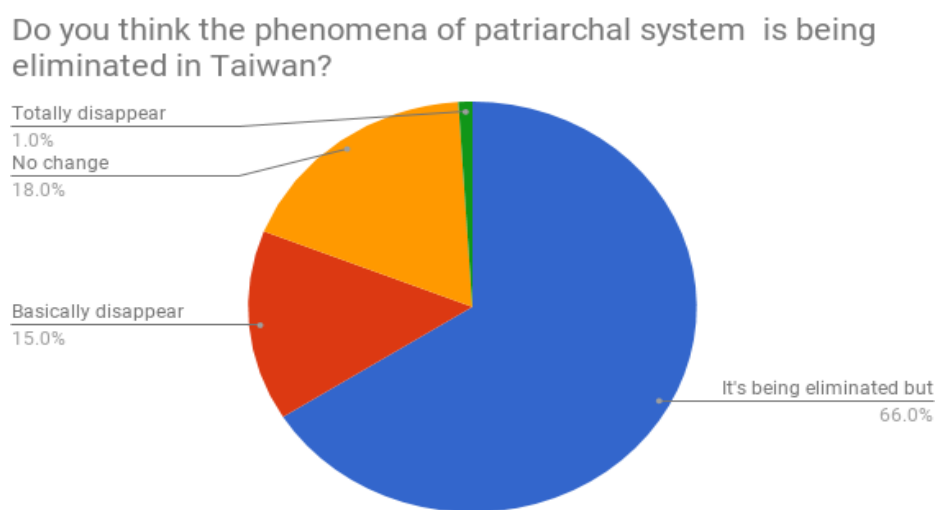
“A married daughter is like water thrown out,” is an old Chinese proverb and a notion held by many Taiwanese, especially the older generation. The saying, meaning women are outsiders to their family of origin once they are married, fully demonstrates the low status of females in society, and the notion espoused by the patriarchal system. The definition of the patriarchal system is a concept in society that considers men and women to be inequitable, values men’s rights, and categorizes women as male affiliates, and limits their opportunities for the development of their personal talents. On the other hand, women are also considered to be relatively weak, so they have fewer responsibilities in certain areas compared to men. This concept is common in patriarchal societies and is often accompanied by the notion of female inferiority and gender division. The concept of filial son preference also affects parents’ desire for male children. For instance, in ancient Chinese inscriptions, the male virgin was considered as “Jia”, which means good, but the female was considered as “not worthy”. This notion, has affected a lot of things, including family, living customs, culture, and so on. Traditionally, there was acceptable for a man to have more than one wife, while women were expected to strictly follow the Confucian “three obedience and four virtues,” or obedience to their father before marriage, husband afterward and son in widowhood, and propriety in behavior, speech, demeanor and employment. Furthermore, the society valued men so much that even the Civil

Code promulgated in 1929 favored men, requiring that women adopt the husband's surname after marriage, and live in the husband's place of residence. Moreover, there are still some traditional customs that women should follow even in this century. For instance, women who get married cannot go back to worship their ancestors, and they are not allowed to return to their parents' home on New Year's Eve, the first day, and so on. Also, many languages revealed patriarchal thinking. For instance, in Chinese, "A women who lacks talent is virtuous ", these words reveal the abasement of women's intelligence. Accidentally, Taiwanese aboriginals also have some discriminatory customs, such as females who are on their period cannot attend any ritual sacrifice, and Seediq women cannot touch weapons, or they will bring bad luck. These customs clearly show that women's life in Taiwan is inequitable. However, as time has progressed, people's minds is have changed. Women's status in Taiwan has advanced over the past years thanks to the efforts of feminist advocates. According to the survey, 66 percent of people think that the patriarchal system is being eliminated [figure A], but not completely in Taiwan today. However, most people think the notion of the patriarchal system that is held by elders is ingrained and not easy to change. 51 percent of people think the patriarchal system is happening in the family more than in the workplace or education [Figure B].

Having said that, the Gender Gap Index from the Internet, which was created by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2006 to measure the degree of disparity

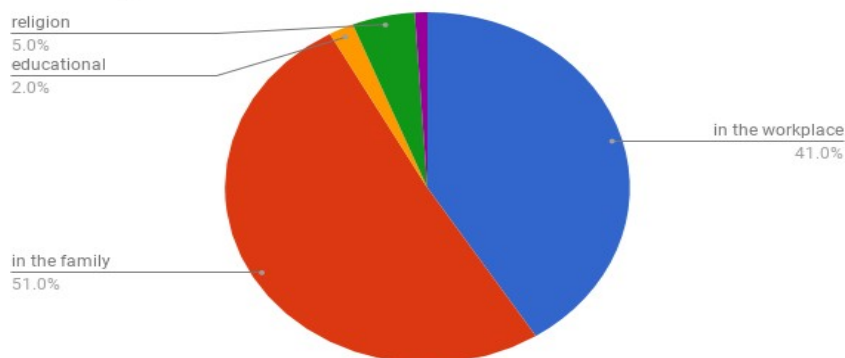
between men and women in social resource allocation and access opportunities. GGI covers four areas of politics, economic participation, education and health [Figure C]. According to the GGI, the gender gap is decreasing. Finally, from the results of surveys demonstrated that the phenomena of patriarchal system still existing, but if we try to change the notion, we all will have an equal life.

[Figure A]

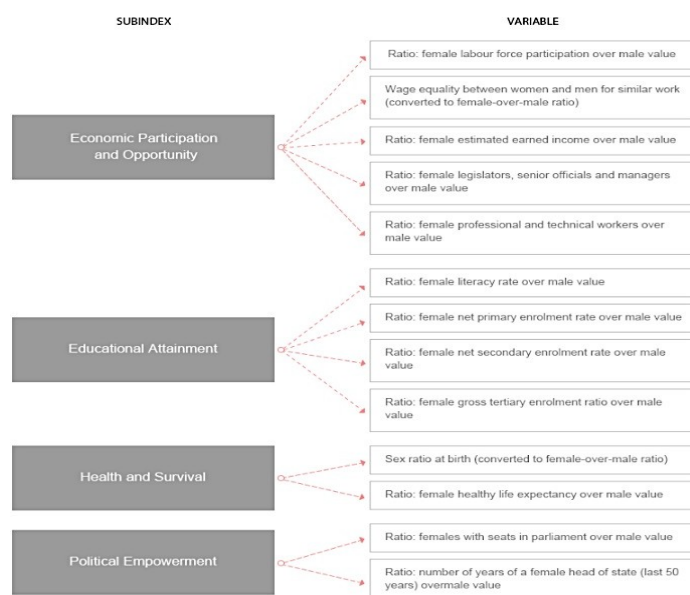


[Figure B]

What side presents the concept of patriarchal system obviously?



[Figure C]



年分 Year	數值 Value	排名 Rank
2016	0.729	38
2015	0.724	43
2014	0.721	41
2013	0.715	39
2012	0.713	39
2011	0.708	40
2010	0.705	42
2009	0.696	53
2008	0.693	52
2007	0.680	53

Chap II

Discrimination in the Workplace

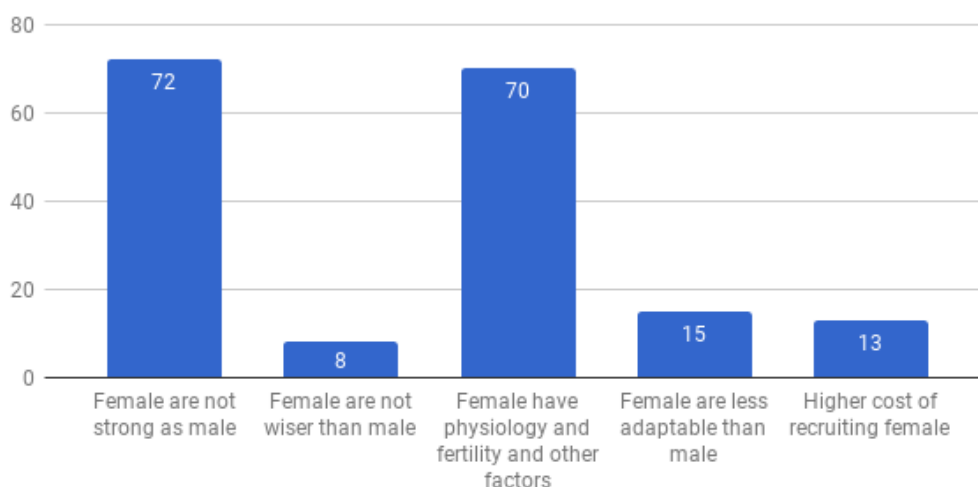
“More female than male workers in Taiwan feel they have suffered discrimination in the workplace because of their gender, a recent poll showed. In addition, 3.7 percent of women felt that their gender worked against them in terms of promotions, compared to 1.5 percent of male workers who felt that way. And 4.9 percent of women polled said they felt they were treated unequally after getting married, higher than the corresponding 0.7 percent among male respondents. Married respondents, regardless of gender, encountered difficulties when asking for leave, but married female respondents said being married was an obstacle when applying for a job, or could result in them being transferred to other departments. Furthermore, 5.2 percent of women surveyed said they had been mistreated in the workplace after becoming pregnant or giving birth.”(Staff writer, 2012, paragraph 2)

According to the online survey, Taiwanese women on average earned 17.6 percent less than men, meaning they would have to work an extra 65 days to receive the same pay. In addition, the survey showed the main reason why companies do not want to hire females. Most people think females are not as strong as males, and females have more problems with their physiological which will impact their company’s operations [Figure D]. As mentioned above, the results definitely break the law of “Gender Equality in Employment Act”, which

can be divided into five parts: the general provisions of the General Regulations, the prohibition of gender discrimination, the prevention and treatment of sexual harassment, the promotion of work equality measures, and the remedies and grievance procedures. The Taiwanese government has always been trying to improve women’s status in workplace. Then after six years people have gradually attached great importance to women’s rights. This transition can also be seen in survey. 59.5 percent of people think that discrimination in the workplace does not exist [Figure E], and 81 percent of people have not been bullied in workplace or school [Figure F]. However, there also many students who said that verbal abuse is the most serious form of bullying in school. Schools should not ignore the problem, and educational campaigns might be the best way to teach students.

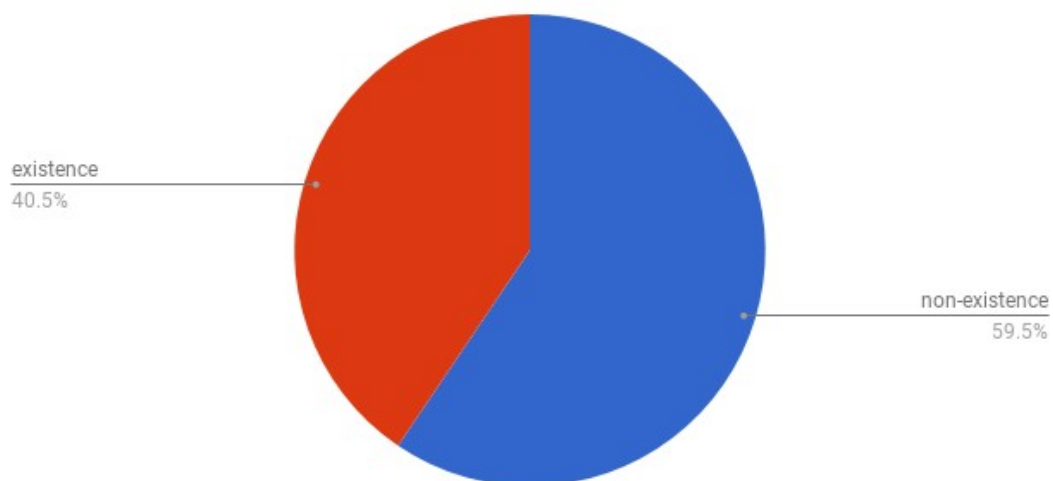
[Figure D]

Which of the following options are the main reason why a company would not want to hire female employees?



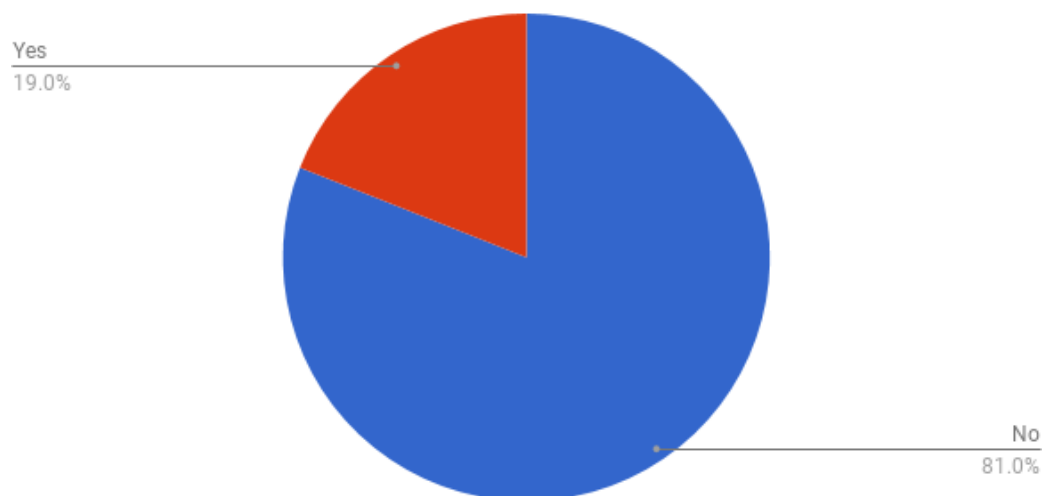
[Figure E]

To whom ever had interviewed for a job, have you ever experienced or seen any sexual discrimination where you've been interviewed?



[Figure F]

Have you ever experienced sexual discrimination in your workplace or school ?



Chap III

The Status of Women in the Family

In Taiwan, most families, even women (including cohabitation) are still the main domestic workers. According to the Comptroller's Office survey, in 1987, women spent an average of 33 hours per week in housework, which was much higher than men's 3 hours (11 times, 30 hours apart). The number of female housework hours dropped to 23 hours in 2000 and 16 hours in 2006. The housework hours for men rose slightly to 4 hours in 2000 (6 times, 19 hours apart), and 6 hours in 2006 (3 times, Gap 10 hours). The narrowing of the gap between men and women is mainly due to the reduction of women's housework time (possibly because of increased food consumption, electrical assistance and service outsourcing), but not by men's concerted efforts. Judging from the family project, apart from trashing, childcare, caring for the elderly or patients, etc., the family has gradually shared the burden. The women are responsible for many routine labor services such as cleaning, grocery shopping, cooking, kitchen cleaning and washing clothes. Men are mostly responsible for accidental work such as, house repairs and maintenance of water and electricity. (藍佩嘉, 2017, paragraph 10)

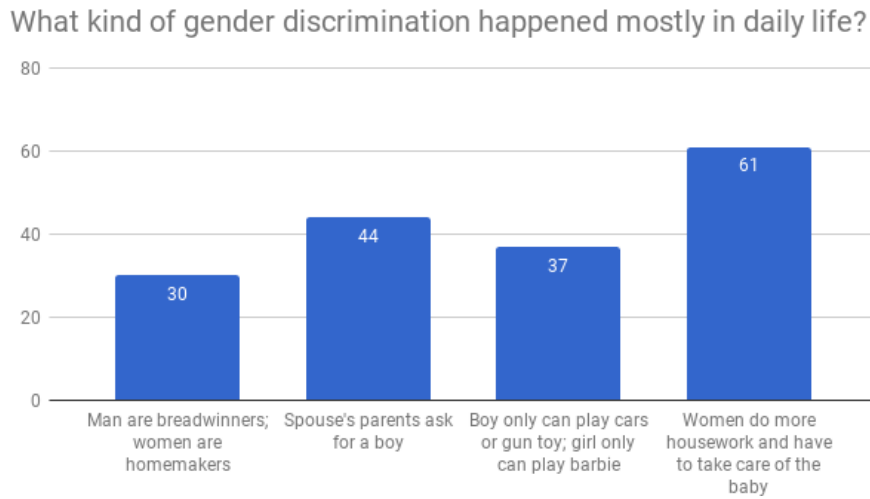
From the paragraph above, we can see that women do more housework than men, even when they both have jobs. Additionally in some families, they even

think taking care of the baby is the mother's duty. This ingrained idea, was also reflected in survey. According to the survey, people think there are three main situations of gender discrimination in daily life [Figure G]: 62 percent of people think that women do more housework, and also have to take care of the baby. The second issue is that the spouse's parents ask for a boy. In our society, many families with patriarchal thinking and local patriarchal families continue to give birth regardless of their affordability until they have a boy. In places where the legal system is not sound, baby girls can also be killed, especially in China. A long time before the 1979 one-child policy, the sex ratio was already unbalanced between boys and girls, due to a high number of infanticides.

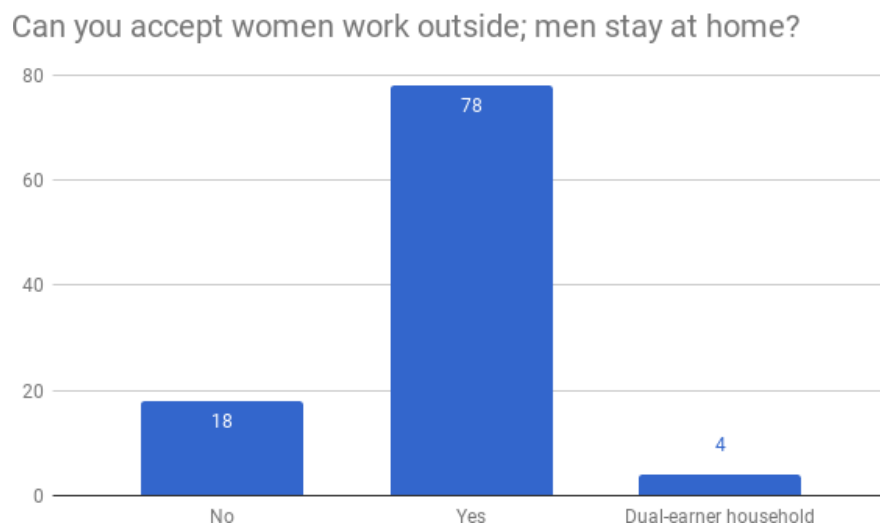
Normally, the naturally higher proportion of boys at birth is compensated by their higher mortality rate. But in China, girls are more likely to be neglected during their childhood and receive less medical treatments than boys. As a result, the sex ratio, instead of balancing out, has grown more disproportionate through ages. Most people think that when girl grows up, they have to marry and they don't need to read too many books. So regardless of their children's abilities and aspirations, they have to leave their daughters to drop out of school to make money for their brothers even if their daughters are doing well. Normally, sons and daughters will be treated differently. For instance, an extreme situation is that some parents treat their son as a baby, even when he is

over 20 years old. He is like a little emperor at home. However, their daughter is treated as a slave and is often beaten. On the other hand, when men are valued, it also means that they have to bear more responsibilities. Some families will be particularly strict with their sons, and their sons are more strict than their daughters. Besides the issue of parents' desire of male children is on the tongues of men, also men are breadwinners, women are homemaker is the hottest issue in Taiwan. This point is related to the first one, which indicated that women do more housework, while men's duty is to make money. Therefore, as time passes, things change, according to survey 78 percent of people can accept women working, and men staying at home [Figure H]. As the result, the mindset is not the only thing people should change. Family communication can also be an effective way to improve women's status in the family. The patterns of women as breadwinners and men as homemakers might not be an awful thing in the family. If we are willing to communicate with each other and come up with solutions, women can also have equal opportunities and status.

[Figure G]



[Figure H]



Conclusion

All in all, women's rights are being acknowledged, but people's mindset have not been changed completely yet. Especially, in the three sections which include the patriarchal system, discrimination in the workplace, and the status of women in the family. These problems happened mostly in daily life. However, through the survey, I find out that there are two ways to solve the problem of discrimination against women. Firstly, educators should put great efforts towards broadcasting in order to teach students that mutual respect is an important part of any relationship. It also helps students to establish a concept of gender equality; thereby changing the lingering prevalence of an outdated concept- the patriarchal system. There are no easy ways to solve the problem completely. But the common recognition of the importance of respect might be a good first step. Another way is that the government should fix laws which to protect women in the workplace and enforce them at every company, no matter how big or small.

"It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent." (*Madeleine Albright, 2015*) Our ancestors fought for women's rights, now women just need to stand up and voice up for what we should have, the world must be changed in someday.

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