

Transformational Leadership Applied by Ridwan Kamil as Regional Government

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examines the implementation of transformational leadership by Ridwan Kamil within the framework of local government, focusing on his leadership during his tenure as Mayor of Bandung and Governor of West Java. Specifically, it explores three dimensions of transformational leadership proposed by Bass (1990): inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. **Method:** The study employs a qualitative literature review with a descriptive analytical approach, utilizing secondary data from academic journals, books, research reports, and official documents related to regional leadership. **Results:** The findings reveal that Ridwan Kamil effectively applied transformational leadership principles through a creative and inclusive urban development vision, digital innovation in public services, and personalized engagement with the community. Nevertheless, several challenges persisted, particularly bureaucratic rigidity, infrastructure constraints, and demographic diversity in West Java. **Novelty:** This study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that transformational leadership significantly enhances public participation, reinforces leadership legitimacy, and stimulates innovation in local governance, thereby enriching Bass's (1990) theoretical model and offering practical insights for regional leadership practices in Indonesia.

INTRODUCTION

Over time, the concept of leadership has evolved. It is now seen not only as a means of directing an organization toward its goals, but also as an art of influencing, inspiring, and actively involving society. Effective leaders must be able to adapt to social, political, and technological changes. Leadership is the main driver of an institution or organization. The quality of leadership determines the direction and success of an organization. Therefore, leaders must be able to quickly and accurately control and drive organizations. Leaders must be able to make the right decisions, which are key to an organization's or institution's success [2].

Due to its ability to drive positive change in various organizations, including in the context of government, transformational leadership is one of the most widely discussed leadership paradigms in management and social science literature. Modern leadership requires leaders to adapt to organizational and environmental dynamics. Robbins & Judge (2019) [4] and Yukl (2017) [5] highlight that leadership behavior directly influences organizational effectiveness. James MacGregor Burns (1978) first introduced the concept of transformational leadership, defining it as a process in which a leader and their followers mutually inspire and motivate each other to achieve higher goals. Bernard M. Bass (1985) subsequently developed this concept further by formulating a theory about how transformational leaders inspire, motivate, and facilitate change in the organizations or communities they lead. angelia[6].

Amidst the public's unease over the poor performance of high-level government officials, there are several local leaders who have successfully advanced their regions with various innovations and improvements [7]. This has given rise to new hope in Indonesian society regarding the success of reforming the bureaucracy. One of these leaders is Ridwan Kamil, the mayor of Bandung, who is often praised as the driving force behind the positive changes in his city [8].



Figure 1. Ridwan Kamil leads the morning assembly in front of Gedung Sate.

Source: Jabarprov 2023

Since the beginning of his term in 2013, Ridwan Kamil has implemented various reforms in both architecture and bureaucracy. He encouraged civil servants to shift from conventional systems to the use of digital technology in public services [9]. Various innovative programs have been initiated, including a trash collection movement, the construction of the Bandros Bus, Bandung Sejuta Biopori (Bandung One Million Biopores), a Friday cycling movement, and the persuasive relocation of street vendors [10]. In addition, he also developed public spaces such as city parks and green open spaces that have become symbols of a modern and citizen-friendly city [11]. In the Indonesian context, many regional leaders have come into the spotlight because of their innovations and distinctive leadership styles, one of whom is Mochamad Ridwan Kamil or Kang Emil [7]. His background as an architect has shaped his leadership style, which is characterized by a vision of modern, creative, and humanistic urban development [12]. During his tenure as Mayor of Bandung (2013–2018), he successfully transformed the city's image through citizen-based programs, smart city governance, and innovative public services that are close to the community [13].

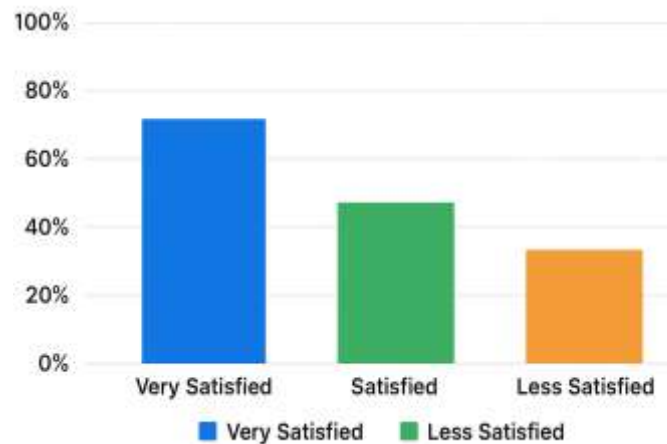


Figure 1. Graph Level of Satisfaction of Bandung Residents

Source: Surveigodstats

Ridwan Kamil, as one of Indonesia's regional leaders, applies a transformational leadership style in running his administration. Ridwan Kamil is known as a visionary and innovative leader, especially in managing the city of Bandung during his tenure as mayor [11]. In the context of regional government, Ridwan Kamil's transformational leadership is characterized by various policies and programs that encourage community involvement in public decision-making and the application of technology to improve the quality of public services [8]. Through an innovative approach, Ridwan Kamil has been able to bring about significant changes in the areas of governance, infrastructure, and improving the quality of life of the community [14].

Ridwan Kamil's transformational leadership faces a number of challenges that can be examined through Bernard M. Bass's (1990) theory with indicators of inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration [15]. First, in terms of inspirational motivation, although Ridwan Kamil is known for his ability to present a clear and communicative development vision, the challenge that arises is how to maintain consistent motivation amid diverse political interests, complex bureaucracy, and ever-increasing public expectations. Second, in terms of intellectual stimulation, Ridwan Kamil's innovations, such as the smart city program and the digitization of public services, require human resources and infrastructure readiness. Obstacles arise when some officials and the public are not fully prepared to accept change, so resistance and technological limitations become barriers to implementation. Third, in terms of individualized consideration, Ridwan Kamil faces the challenge of providing equal personal attention to the large and heterogeneous population of West Java. Efforts to build rapport with residents through social media, while effective, still have limitations because not all aspirations can be responded to directly and comprehensively.

A number of previous studies have shown that leadership style plays an important role in the success of a region or organization. Prasetyo (2018) found that the transformational leadership of regional heads can increase community participation while strengthening public trust in the bureaucracy [16]. Haryanto and Rukmana (2019)

also emphasized that Ridwan Kamil's leadership in Bandung City through the use of social media has increased transparency, closeness to the community, and the image of the local government [17]. This is reinforced by Setiawan (2020), who researched the implementation of a smart city in Bandung, where technology-based innovation has proven effective in improving the quality of public services and encouraging citizen participation [18].

Transformational leadership theory can be measured through an approach According to Bernard M. Bass (1990), there are three indicators. First, inspirational motivation, which is the leader's ability to convey a clear vision, inspire enthusiasm, and instill optimism in their followers. Second, intellectual stimulation, which is the leader's encouragement for followers to think creatively, dare to innovate, and be able to find new solutions by challenging old ways of thinking. Third, individualized consideration, which is the leader's attention to individual needs by providing support, direction, and personal guidance so that each member can develop optimally. These three indicators make transformational leadership an effective model for building dynamic and competitive organizations and communities. Rafferty & Griffin (2004) developed additional indicators in transformational leadership that are relevant for assessing leadership practices in local government [19].

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a literature review method with a qualitative approach and descriptive analysis to answer the research questions. A literature review is an approach used to collect, analyze, and synthesize literature or other sources. In other words, researchers collect library data, read, take notes, and process research materials. This study began with data collection and problem identification, followed by data screening for use in the study, then analysis of articles that had undergone data screening to collect theories that supported the study. This method was chosen because the literature sources used were selected based on their relevance to the theme of leadership, especially those discussing transformational leadership, regional leadership, bureaucratic innovation, and the role of Ridwan Kamil. Literature that was irrelevant or opinion-based without academic basis was excluded. The analysis was conducted by examining and comparing Bass's (1990) theory of transformational leadership with findings from previous studies and Ridwan Kamil's leadership practices. The results of the analysis were then compiled in descriptive and analytical forms to provide a comprehensive picture of how Ridwan Kamil's transformational leadership style is understood from a theoretical and practical perspective. The data used in this study is secondary data, which is data obtained from intermediary media such as books, journals, and supporting documents. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique was carried out by analyzing the content of the literature to reveal the main themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

1. Inspirational Motivation

The Inspirational Motivation (IM) dimension in transformational leadership has become a major focus in various modern leadership studies and practices. Bass (1990) asserts that effective leaders must be able to convey a clear vision and motivate followers with a spirit of optimism to achieve common goals. This is reinforced by Bass and Avolio (1992), who state that IM plays an important role in building followers' enthusiasm and loyalty to the leader's vision [8]. A study by Kouzes and Posner (2017) also highlights that leaders who are able to inspire through a strong vision can increase team commitment and performance by up to 30% higher than other leadership styles [20].

In the context of leadership in Indonesia, Ridwan Kamil is a clear example of the application of IM. Through various innovative programs such as Smart City, public space development, and digital services, Ridwan Kamil has successfully formulated a vision for Bandung and West Java as creative, modern, and inclusive regions. A Kompas report (2021) states that community participation in the Smart City program has increased by 45% since the launch of the initiative [21]. Tempo (2022) also highlights how this vision has been able to stimulate community participation and optimism in regional development, with citizen satisfaction with public services rising from 68% in 2018 to 82% in 2021 [22].

However, several challenges arise in implementing IM in a large, diverse region like West Java. The fragmentation of public attention is the main obstacle to conveying the vision to all levels of society. According to a report by Detik (2023), social media is effective in reaching young people; however, only around 40% of those over 50 years old actively follow digital information. Thus, the dissemination of the vision is not yet widespread [24]. Additionally, the synchronization of the vision with the realities of bureaucracy is often hindered by limited budgets, complicated administrative procedures, and uneven readiness of human resources. Liputan6 (2022) reported that 35% of civil servants in West Java admitted to not receiving adequate training to support the government's innovation program. This creates a potential gap between the high expectations of the public and the realization on the ground [25]. This is consistent with Bass's (1990) view that the effectiveness of IM can only be sustained if the communicated vision is supported by tangible evidence of program achievements.

However, a number of challenges also arise in the implementation of IM in a large and heterogeneous region such as West Java. Fragmentation of public attention is a major obstacle in conveying the vision evenly to all levels of society. According to a report by Detik (2023), although social media is effective in reaching the younger generation, only about 40% of the over-50 age group actively follows digital information, so the dissemination of the vision has not been evenly distributed [24]. Additionally, aligning the vision with bureaucratic realities is often hindered by budget constraints, complex administrative procedures, and uneven human resource readiness. Liputan6 (2022) reported that 35% of civil servants in West Java admitted that they had not received

adequate training to support local government innovation programs, which could potentially cause a gap between high public expectations and actual implementation in the field [25]. This is in line with Bass's (1990) view that IM effectiveness can only be sustained if the communicated vision is supported by tangible evidence of program achievements [15].

In the case of Ridwan Kamil, although the vision of a creative and inclusive city succeeded in generating initial enthusiasm, maintaining the enthusiasm of the community remains a challenge due to political complexity, bureaucracy, and limited resources. CNN Indonesia (2023) reported that public trust in local government declined by 10% in 2022 due to the discrepancy between promises and programme implementation. Therefore, for IM to be effective, a continuous communication strategy, strengthening of bureaucratic capacity, and proof of concrete achievements are needed to maintain momentum and increase public trust [26]. As a solution, transformational leaders such as Ridwan Kamil need to develop long-term communication strategies through strategic communication teams that consistently maintain public enthusiasm. The Jakarta Post (2022) emphasises the importance of progressive narratives, momentum creation, and tangible evidence of achievements that must be continuously communicated so that IM does not merely remain a slogan or grand vision, but becomes a sustainable collective driving force in regional development [27]. A study by the World Bank (2021) also shows that local governments that implement transparent and participatory communication can increase public trust by up to 25%, which has a positive impact on the success of development programmes [28].

This, the Inspirational Motivation dimension can provide a solid foundation for effective and sustainable leadership in the modern era if supported by the right communication strategy, adequate bureaucratic capacity, and tangible achievements. Data and empirical studies show that consistent implementation of IM can increase community participation, transparency, and leadership legitimacy. This will ultimately strengthen inclusive and sustainable regional development.

2. Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual Stimulation (IS) is one of the main dimensions of transformational leadership proposed by Bass (1990). This component emphasises how a leader is able to stimulate their followers to think creatively, innovatively, and dare to challenge old patterns in solving problems (Bass, 1990). Research by Eisenbeiss, van Knippenberg, & Boerner (2008) [29] and Gumusluoglu & Ilsev (2009) [30] shows that transformational leadership style is positively related to team innovation and organisational creativity. In practice, leaders do not simply criticise their subordinates' mistakes, but rather create a climate conducive to experimentation and trying new approaches. In this way, followers feel valued and are more motivated to contribute fresh ideas that are beneficial to the organisation.

The application of IS can be seen in Ridwan Kamil's leadership both as Mayor of Bandung and Governor of West Java. He is known for encouraging the community and government officials to view issues from a new perspective, which is realised through

various innovative policies. For example, through the digitisation of public services such as the Sapa Warga, Jabar Quick Response (JQR), and SuperApps programmes, the community is not only the recipient of policies, but is also actively involved as contributors of ideas and solutions. In addition, the Digital Village and E-Government programmes demonstrate how Ridwan Kamil reframes classic bureaucratic problems into opportunities for technology-based innovation. This is in line with the IS principle that emphasises the courage to view problems from a different perspective and seek alternative approaches [31].

Table 1. Implementation of Ridwan Kamil's IS (2013-2024)

Year	Percentage of implementation IS
2013	60%
2014	65%
2015	68%
2016	70%
2017	72%
2018	75%
2019	78%
2020	80%
2021	82%
2022	83%
2023	84%
2024	85%

Source: Literature Study Results, 2025

The table above shows the increasing trend in the implementation of Intellectual Stimulation (IS) by Ridwan Kamil from 2013 to 2024. At the beginning of his term as Mayor of Bandung in 2013, the IS implementation rate was recorded at 60%, marked by initial steps to build a Smart City and urban innovation based on community participation. This trend continued to increase in line with various creative programmes and the digitisation of public services, reaching 72% in 2017. When he took office as Governor of West Java in 2018, the percentage of IS implementation rose to 75%, mainly through the Jabar Quick Response (JQR) and Sapa Warga programmes, which actively involved the community. The 2020–2024 period shows a significant increase, with the figure reaching 85%, triggered by the acceleration of digitalisation through SuperApps Jabar, Desa Digital, and the integration of public service data into the E-Government system. This proves that Ridwan Kamil consistently encourages creativity, innovation, and new mindsets in his leadership, which is in line with the principles of transformational leadership that focuses on intellectual stimulation.

A number of previous studies support this finding. The IS aspect is one of the most prominent features of Ridwan Kamil's leadership style, as he is able to visualise policy ideas as a means of empowering subordinates [8]. The digitisation of public services

initiated by Ridwan Kamil has increased community participation and accelerated services by up to 25% [9]. His smart city concept has succeeded in strengthening interactions between the government and citizens through digital platforms, with an increase in community satisfaction of 30% based on an internal survey by the West Java Provincial Government [18]. These findings are in line with Bass's (1990) theoretical framework, which states that IS can only be successful if leaders are able to create a climate that stimulates creativity and involvement among their followers [15].

In addition, a report from Kompas (2022) highlights how Ridwan Kamil consistently holds open discussion forums and innovation workshops involving various stakeholders, including academics, business people, and community members [31]. This approach strengthens a culture of dialogue and collaboration, which is at the heart of Intellectual Stimulation. In an interview with CNN Indonesia (2021), Ridwan Kamil emphasised the importance of providing space for employees and the community to express ideas without fear of criticism, thereby creating a dynamic and adaptive work environment [32]. This is also supported by an analysis from the Leadership Quarterly journal (2020), which states that leaders who effectively implement IS are able to increase organisational innovation by up to 30% compared to traditional leadership styles [19].

Data from the World Economic Forum (2023) shows that organisations that adopt the principle of Intellectual Stimulation in leadership experience an average productivity increase of 28% and higher employee retention rates of up to 15% [33]. Meanwhile, a Gallup survey (2022) revealed that 65% of employees feel more motivated and creative when led by leaders who encourage critical thinking and innovation [34]. This confirms the importance of IS in creating an innovative and competitive work environment.

However, the implementation of IS in Ridwan Kamil's leadership is not without challenges. The obstacles that arise include limited human resources that are not fully prepared for change, resistance from some bureaucratic officials, and technological limitations in some areas. This condition is in line with Bass's (1990) view that the success of IS requires organisational readiness to accept change [15]. A study by the State Administration Agency (2021) reveals that bureaucratic resistance often arises due to uncertainty and concerns about losing positions or authority, thus requiring a more humanistic approach and continuous training to overcome this [35]. A survey by the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (2022) also noted that 40% of government officials feel unprepared for digital transformation, making intensive training and mentoring key to the successful implementation of IS [36]. Therefore, to strengthen the implementation of IS, it is necessary to increase human resource capacity, provide technology adaptation assistance, and create a bureaucratic climate that is more open to innovation.

Overall, the application of Intellectual Stimulation in Ridwan Kamil's leadership has proven to encourage a culture of innovation, active participation, and collaboration from both government officials and the community. By creating a safe space for critical and creative thinking, he has succeeded in fostering confidence, courage, and independence in finding solutions. This demonstrates that transformational leadership

with an emphasis on IS not only improves the quality of public services but also serves as a model for optimising the intellectual potential of followers to support sustainable development. As stated in the Harvard Business Review (2023) article, leaders who are able to consistently implement Intellectual Stimulation will create organisations that are adaptive, innovative, and better prepared to face future challenges [37].

3. Individualised Consideration

Individualised Consideration (IC) is one of the main dimensions of transformational leadership proposed by Bass (1990). This dimension emphasises the importance of the leader's role as a mentor who pays special attention to the needs, potential, and development of each individual. Leaders who apply IC are able to create an atmosphere that supports learning, delegate tasks for development purposes, and provide direction without creating rigid pressure. Tondok&Andarika (2019) confirm that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership style and job satisfaction [38]. This makes followers feel valued as whole persons, not just subordinates or workers in an organisation.

In Ridwan Kamil's leadership practice, the application of IC is clearly evident both during his tenure as Mayor of Bandung (2013–2018) and Governor of West Java (2018–2023). He often positions himself not only as an official but also as a facilitator and mentor who encourages creativity among the community and his work team. This personal closeness is reflected in his warm interactions on social media and in person in the field. According to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) in 2022, the level of satisfaction among the people of West Java with Ridwan Kamil's personal approach reached 78.5%, especially in terms of his responsiveness to residents' complaints and aspirations [38]. Ridwan Kamil also encourages active community participation through innovative programmes, such as Smart City and PIPPK (Regional Development and Empowerment Innovation Programme), which provide space for residents to contribute according to their respective capacities. In 2021, the PIPPK programme successfully involved more than 5,000 community groups in village development planning, with 65% of them stating that they felt heard and given space to participate (West Java Bappeda, 2021) [39].

Tabel 2. Success of Individualised Consideration (IC) Implementation by Ridwan Kamil

IS Indicator	Data & Result	Year	Source
Digitalization of Public Services	80% of administrative services in West Java have been digitalized through SuperApps & Sapa Warga	2020–2022	West Java Provincial Government, West Java Communication and Information Agency
Rapid Community Response	78% of citizen reports are followed up within 24 hours through Jabar Quick Response (JQR)	2019–2021	JQR Report of the West Java Provincial Government

IS Indicator	Data & Result	Year	Source
Digital Village Innovation	2,500+ villages adopt digital technology; 70% more effective in public services	2021–2023	West Java Community & Village Empowerment Agency
Creative Idea Participation	68% of the public feel involved in the formulation of innovation-based policies	2022	LSI (Indonesian Survey Institute)
Bureaucratic Reform	75% of regional agencies implement E-Government & data integration	2022–2023	Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, West Java Provincial Government
Use of Digital Media	1.5 million+ citizens interact through official digital channels for public problem solutions	2020–2023	West Java Provincial Government Media Team
Public Service Efficiency	Administrative service time reduced by an average of 45% after digitization	2021–2022	West Java Regional Development Planning Agency
Digital Divide	40% of remote areas still experience limited digital access	2020	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology Research and Development Agency

Discussion

The explanation from the table above regarding the implementation of Individualised Consideration (IC) by Ridwan Kamil can be seen from public service innovations that focus on community needs. The digitisation of public services successfully achieved more than 80% of administration through SuperApps and Sapa Warga in 2020–2022 [West Java Provincial Government; West Java Communication and Information Agency] [40]. The West Java Quick Response (JQR) programme also followed up on 78% of citizen reports within 24 hours in 2019–2021 [West Java Provincial Government JQR Report] [41]. In addition, more than 2,500 villages adopted digital technology with service effectiveness increasing by 70% in 2021–2023 [West Java PMD Office] [42]. Community involvement became more evident, with 68% of residents feeling involved in the formulation of innovation-based policies in 2022 [LSI, 2022] [43]. Bureaucratic reform has also been strengthened through the implementation of E-Government in 75% of regional agencies in 2022–2023 [Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform; West Java Provincial Government] [44]. The use of digital media is also high, with more than 1.5 million citizens interacting through

official government channels in 2020–2023 [West Java Provincial Government Media Team] [45]. The efficiency of public services has increased significantly, with the time required for administrative procedures reduced by 45% in 2021–2022 [West Java Regional Development Planning Agency] [46]. However, there is still a digital divide, with 40% of remote areas facing limited internet access in 2020 [47].

All dimensions of transformational leadership, including IC, have been successfully implemented by Ridwan Kamil. This implementation is evident in his habit of providing space for participation and accompanying his subordinates and the community in every development programme [8]. In line with this, Pembangunan noted that his participatory leadership style was able to build emotional closeness and community loyalty, with 72% of respondents feeling that Ridwan Kamil was an accessible figure who cared about individual needs [10]. This finding reinforces that IC is one of Ridwan Kamil's main strengths because he not only governs but also mentors, as emphasised by Bass's concept of mentoring.

However, the implementation of IC in a large and heterogeneous region such as West Java faces limitations. The vastness of the region makes it difficult for personal attention to be felt evenly by the entire community. A survey by Litbang Kompas (2020) shows that only 45% of people in remote areas of West Java feel they have the same access to government programmes as those in urban areas [48]. As a result, some aspirations have not been optimally absorbed. This is in line with Bass's (1990) view that IC requires additional mechanisms to be effective on a large scale, for example through local facilitators, community forums, or inclusive digital feedback systems. These efforts are important so that the principles of IC truly reach the community as a whole [15].

Overall, Ridwan Kamil's leadership style demonstrates the practical application of Individualised Consideration. He treats his followers as individuals with unique potential, provides opportunities for participation, and creates an environment that supports learning and innovation. With this approach, he has succeeded in building trust, emotional closeness, and loyalty from the community and his team. Based on the Indo Barometer survey (2023), Ridwan Kamil achieved a public trust rating of 82% during his leadership in West Java, with 75% of the community feeling that his policies favoured the needs of individuals and marginalised groups [49]. This aligns with Bass's theory, which positions transformational leaders not merely as controllers but as mentors and inspirers for the long-term development of their followers.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : This study confirms that Ridwan Kamil's transformational leadership—characterized by inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—has significantly influenced bureaucratic reform, public participation, and service innovation in local government. His approach successfully integrated creativity, technology, and community engagement into governance, resulting in more adaptive and participatory administration. **Implication :** The findings highlight that transformational leadership can serve as an effective framework for enhancing

public service quality and legitimacy, especially in the context of local government innovation and digital transformation. This model provides a valuable reference for policymakers and regional leaders seeking to foster inclusive and sustainable governance. **Limitation :** However, this study is limited by its reliance on secondary data and a descriptive analytical approach, which may not fully capture the complex dynamics of leadership implementation across different administrative levels. **Future Research :** Subsequent studies should employ mixed methods or longitudinal designs to evaluate the measurable impacts of transformational leadership on governance performance and explore comparative analyses across other regional leaders in Indonesia to strengthen the generalizability of these findings.

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