

Impact of Community Radio on Agricultural Development in Southwest Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of community radio on agricultural development in Southwest Nigeria. Using a survey design, data were collected from 100 respondents, comprising farmers actively engaged in agricultural activities. The findings reveal that community radio serves as a critical medium for disseminating agricultural knowledge, promoting the adoption of innovative practices, and improving farming productivity. A significant majority of respondents acknowledged that agricultural programs on community radio enhanced their knowledge of modern techniques, contributed to higher yields, and informed their decision-making. However, challenges such as poor signal quality, limited access to affordable radio devices, and inadequate agricultural content hinder the optimal utilization of community radio. The study adopts Development Communication Theory which was primarily propounded by Everett M. Rogers in 1962 and Diffusion of Innovations Theory, further expanded by Wilbur Schramm in 1964, emphasizing on the role of communication in promoting social change and development, particularly in rural settings. Recommendations include improvement of Signal Quality that the government and radio stations should invest in infrastructure to enhance signal strength and expand the reach of community radio to remote areas. This research underscores the transformative potential of community radio in addressing agricultural challenges and fostering rural development.

Keywords: Work Environment, Organizational Commitment, Librarians, Academic Library, Tertiary Institution

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the backbone of the Nigerian economy, contributing significantly to the nation's GDP and serving as the primary source of livelihood for the majority of its rural population (FAO, 2021). Despite its critical role, the agricultural sector in Nigeria faces numerous challenges, including limited access to timely and relevant information on best practices, market opportunities, pest management, and climate change adaptation. These barriers hinder the sector's growth and the ability of farmers to achieve sustainable agricultural practices (Ajani & Igbokwe, 2020).

In rural areas, where literacy levels are often low and access to modern communication infrastructure is limited, community radio has emerged as a vital tool for disseminating agricultural information. Community radio, defined as a participatory and localized broadcasting medium, is particularly suited to rural contexts because it communicates in local languages, reflects the cultural norms of its audience, and allows for direct feedback from listeners (Kumar & Nirmala, 2020). By addressing these gaps in communication, community radio has been instrumental in bridging the information divide, fostering agricultural productivity, and improving rural livelihoods.

In Southwest Nigeria, where agriculture plays a central role in the socio-economic development of the region, community radio has gained recognition as a key driver of agricultural transformation. Radio stations such as Orisun FM, Rave FM and Unique FM have tailored programs to meet the needs of farmers, providing information on crop planting schedules, pest control techniques, weather forecasts, and access to agricultural extension services. These programs have enhanced farmers' decision-making processes and promoted the adoption of innovative farming practices (Ojebode, 2019).

This study aims to examine the specific impact of community radio on agricultural development in Southwest Nigeria. It explores how community radio stations have influenced agricultural practices, improved farmers' knowledge, and addressed the challenges of agricultural communication in the region. By doing so, it seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on leveraging localized media for rural development and sustainable agriculture.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Radio

Radio is one of the oldest and most effective mass communication tools, widely regarded for its ability to reach large audiences across geographic and socio-economic divides. As an audio-based medium, radio is accessible to individuals regardless of literacy levels, making it a critical platform for information dissemination in rural and underserved communities. According to McLeish (2005), radio's affordability and immediacy make it an unparalleled tool for real-time communication, particularly in emergencies or when addressing development challenges such as agriculture, health, and education.

Historically, radio has played a transformative role in fostering awareness and enabling societal progress. Its capacity to broadcast diverse programming—ranging from news and entertainment to educational content—has made it a cornerstone of mass communication. In the context of rural development, radio has been particularly influential due to its adaptability and ability to address localized needs. Asemah et al. (2013) observed that radio serves as a "unifying force," bringing together communities through shared experiences and providing a platform for marginalized voices.

Community Radio

Community radio, a subset of traditional radio broadcasting, is distinct in its approach and purpose. It is a non-commercial, participatory medium that serves the specific needs of a local community. Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2001) defined community radio as "radio that is owned and managed by the community, for the community, and about the community." Unlike mainstream radio, which often prioritizes commercial interests, community radio focuses on addressing local issues, promoting cultural identity, and fostering development through grassroots participation.

One of the defining features of community radio is its localized content. Programming is typically produced in local languages and dialects, ensuring cultural relevance and accessibility. Additionally, community radio often involves members of the community in program creation and decision-making processes, thus enhancing its participatory nature. Jallof (2012) emphasized that this participatory approach not only empowers communities but also strengthens social cohesion and collective problem-solving.

The Role of Community Radio in Development

Community radio plays a pivotal role in promoting development, particularly in rural and marginalized areas. It acts as a bridge between policymakers, development agencies, and local populations, facilitating the flow of information and feedback. In agriculture, for example, community radio provides farmers with timely updates on weather, crop management techniques, and market prices. Similarly, in health, it disseminates critical information on disease prevention, maternal care, and hygiene practices. According to Kumar and Nirmala (2020), the success of community radio lies in its ability to adapt content to the specific socio-cultural and economic contexts of its audience. This adaptability makes community radio an effective tool for addressing issues such as poverty, illiteracy, and gender inequality. Moreover, its grassroots nature ensures that the concerns and voices of the community are amplified, fostering a sense of ownership and accountability.

In Nigeria, community radio has gained recognition as a vital medium for rural development. Despite regulatory and financial challenges, several community radio stations have successfully addressed issues such as agriculture, health, education, and governance. For instance, stations like Orisun FM in Southwest Nigeria focus on delivering localized agricultural information, enabling farmers to adopt innovative practices and improve their livelihoods (Ojebode, 2019). The participatory nature of community radio in Nigeria has also facilitated social mobilization and advocacy. During elections, community radio stations have been instrumental in promoting voter education and encouraging civic participation. Additionally, they serve as platforms for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in regions affected by social and political unrest.

The Role of Media in Agricultural Development

Media plays a pivotal role in advancing agricultural development, particularly in rural areas where traditional farming practices dominate, and access to formal education is often limited. The dissemination of relevant and timely agricultural information can significantly impact productivity, sustainability, and rural livelihoods. Various studies underscore the transformative potential of media in bridging the information gap and promoting innovation in agriculture. Effective communication is crucial for agricultural development, and media platforms have emerged as essential tools in this regard. Aker (2011) posited that media, particularly radio, serves as a cost-effective means of delivering agricultural information to rural communities. Radio programs designed for farmers often cover topics such as crop management, pest control, weather forecasts, and market prices. The accessibility of radio, even in the remotest areas,

ensures that smallholder farmers receive critical updates that influence their agricultural decisions.

Moreover, television and print media have also contributed to agricultural development, albeit to a lesser extent compared to radio. Television programs focused on agriculture provide visual demonstrations of farming techniques, making them especially useful for illiterate farmers. Similarly, agricultural journals and newsletters offer in-depth information and success stories that inspire farmers to adopt new practices (Ajani & Igbokwe, 2020).

The Impact of Community Radio on Agricultural Development in Southwest Nigeria

One of the most significant impacts of community radio on agriculture in Southwest Nigeria is its role in disseminating relevant and timely information to farmers. Unlike commercial radio, which often focuses on entertainment and urban audiences, community radio is tailored to meet the specific needs of rural communities. Stations such as Orisun FM, Rave FM and Eki FM broadcast agricultural programs in local languages, ensuring that the information is accessible to farmers regardless of their literacy levels. These programs cover topics such as planting techniques, pest and disease management, soil fertility improvement, and post-harvest storage methods (Ojebode, 2019).

According to Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2001), the ability of community radio to provide localized content makes it particularly effective in addressing the unique challenges faced by farmers in specific regions. For example, during planting seasons, community radio stations in Southwest Nigeria broadcast weather updates and advice farmers on the best planting times, helping them to optimize yields and reduce losses. Community radio has been instrumental in encouraging farmers to adopt modern and sustainable agricultural practices. Through participatory programming, farmers are introduced to innovative techniques such as crop rotation, organic farming, and the use of improved seed varieties. Experts and extension workers are often invited to radio programs to provide practical advice and answer farmers' questions. This interactive format fosters trust and ensures that the information is practical and actionable.

Kumar and Nirmala (2020) emphasized that community radio serves as a bridge between agricultural researchers and rural farmers. By simplifying complex research findings into relatable and easy-to-understand messages, community radio facilitates the transfer of knowledge from academic institutions to the grassroots. In Southwest Nigeria, this has led to increased adoption of improved farming methods, which, in turn, has enhanced productivity and food security. Another critical impact of community radio on agricultural development in

Southwest Nigeria is its role in linking farmers to markets. Many farmers in the region struggle to access market information, leading to exploitation by middlemen and low returns on their produce. Community radio addresses this issue by broadcasting daily market prices, creating awareness of alternative markets, and providing tips on negotiation and collective bargaining. Community radio stations often organize programs that connect farmers with potential buyers, cooperatives, and agricultural value chains. These initiatives not only improve farmers' income but also encourage them to invest in expanding their operations. Asiedu and van

Impact of Community Radio on Agricultural Practices

Community radio plays a significant role in transferring agricultural knowledge and improving farming practices across Southwest Nigeria. By broadcasting in local languages, these radio stations ensure that even farmers with low literacy levels can easily access the information. Programs cover a broad range of topics, including soil fertility, crop rotation, pest and disease control, irrigation techniques, and sustainable farming practices.

In Southwest Nigeria, stations like Rave FM (Osogbo) and Radio Nigeria Ibadan have been instrumental in disseminating agricultural knowledge. These stations often collaborate with agricultural experts, extension officers, and experienced farmers to discuss pressing issues, answer listeners' questions, and provide practical solutions to farming problems. According to Ojebode (2019), community radio facilitates the diffusion of agricultural innovations, empowering farmers to improve crop yields and adopt more sustainable farming methods.

With the growing threat of climate change, community radio in Southwest Nigeria has become an important resource for farmers seeking to adapt to changing environmental conditions. Community radio stations frequently broadcast weather forecasts, climate change-related tips, and advice on how to manage weather-related challenges like droughts and floods. This information allows farmers to plan planting schedules, select suitable crops, and use water and land resources more efficiently. Aker (2011) argues that radio provides timely and localized information, helping farmers mitigate the impacts of adverse weather conditions. In Southwest Nigeria, where farming is heavily dependent on rainfall patterns, this climate-focused programming has helped many farmers reduce crop losses and adapt their farming practices to be more climate-resilient.

Empirical Review

The empirical review examines existing studies on the impact of community radio on agricultural development, focusing on its role in enhancing farming practices, improving

productivity, and fostering community engagement in rural areas. Numerous studies have highlighted the significant contributions of community radio to agricultural development, particularly in developing regions, including Southwest Nigeria.

Aker (2011) explored the role of community radio in agricultural extension services, noting that radio broadcasts offer real-time weather updates and agricultural advice that help farmers make informed decisions. Aker's study, conducted in Niger, revealed that farmers who had access to community radio programming experienced higher yields due to better planning based on weather forecasts and crop management advice.

Similarly, Asiedu and van Tilburg (2020) examined the role of community radio in Ghana, where radio programs helped smallholder farmers improve their knowledge of sustainable farming practices. These programs, which aired regularly, emphasized eco-friendly farming methods, pest control, and organic farming. Their findings suggest that farmers who engaged with community radio showed higher levels of adoption of environmentally friendly farming practices.

Ojebode (2019) conducted research in Nigeria, specifically in rural communities in the Southwest, where community radio stations like Rave FM and Radio Nigeria Ibadan have been instrumental in improving agricultural practices. Ojebode found that these stations provided critical agricultural information such as new farming techniques, pest control strategies, and market price updates, which helped farmers increase productivity and reduce post-harvest losses. His study also pointed out that these radio stations offered a platform for farmers to discuss challenges and share solutions, fostering a sense of community.

Identified Gaps

While the impact of community radio on agricultural development has been well documented, several gaps remain in the literature. Much of the existing research on the impact of community radio has focused on regions outside Southwest Nigeria. There is limited empirical evidence specific to Southwest Nigeria, particularly in terms of how local community radio stations, like Orisun FM, Rave FM, Eki FM and Radio Nigeria Ibadan, influence agricultural practices and decision-making among rural farmers in this region. While studies have highlighted the role of community radio in improving agricultural knowledge and practices, there is a lack of comprehensive data on the direct impact of these programs on farmers' income, productivity, or long-term agricultural sustainability. The use of emerging technologies such as mobile phones, internet platforms, and social media alongside community radio has not been sufficiently

explored. Given the increasing integration of ICTs in rural areas, understanding how these technologies complement community radio in enhancing agricultural development remains a crucial gap.

Many studies emphasize the role of women in agricultural radio programs, fewer studies focus on the role of youth. Given the high rates of youth unemployment in Southwest Nigeria and the growing interest in agribusiness, there is a need to explore how community radio can attract and engage young people in agriculture and entrepreneurship. Despite the benefits of community radio, there are barriers that limit its reach and effectiveness, particularly in remote or underserved areas. The challenges of illiteracy, access to radios, and the influence of digital media have not been sufficiently explored in relation to community radio's impact on agricultural development.

Theoretical Review

The theoretical framework for understanding the impact of community radio on agricultural practices is grounded in communication theories that emphasize the role of media in development. Development Communication Theory was primarily developed by Everett M. Rogers in 1962 with his Diffusion of Innovations Theory, and further expanded by Wilbur Schramm in 1964, emphasizing the role of communication in promoting social change and development, particularly in rural settings.

Development Communication Theory, which emphasizes the role of communication in the process of social change and development, offers valuable insights into how community radio contributes to agricultural development. This theory underscores the importance of using communication tools to address local problems, spread innovative ideas, and bring about social transformation. It highlights the role of media in enhancing knowledge, changing behavior, and fostering participation in development processes. By applying Development Communication Theory to community radio in Southwest Nigeria, we can better understand how radio programs influence agricultural practices and support rural development.

Development Communication Theory is rooted in the idea that communication is a fundamental driver of development. According to Rogers (2003), communication technologies, such as community radio, play a crucial role in spreading innovations and best practices within communities. The theory emphasizes two-way communication, where the media does not only transmit information but also listens to and interacts with the community. This participatory approach allows community members, particularly farmers, to voice their concerns, share

experiences, and contribute to the content of radio programs, thereby ensuring that the information is relevant and applicable to their needs.

In the context of Southwest Nigeria, community radio stations like Rave FM and Radio Nigeria Ibadan have adopted this participatory communication model. These stations regularly broadcast programs that address agricultural issues specific to the region, such as soil fertility, pest control, irrigation, and climate-smart practices. The interaction between farmers and radio hosts, where farmers ask questions and share insights, is an embodiment of the two-way communication process that is central to Development Communication Theory. One of the key aspects of Development Communication Theory is the diffusion of innovations—how new ideas and practices spread throughout a community. Rogers (2003) explains that the spread of innovations often follows a predictable process: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption. Community radio, through its accessibility and localized approach, accelerates this diffusion process by making agricultural innovations more visible and accessible to rural farmers in Southwest Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study explored the impact of community radio on agricultural development in Southwest Nigeria using a survey method. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The survey focus on understanding farmers' attitudes, behaviors, and practices in relation to agricultural programs broadcast on community radio stations. The target population for this study comprises farmers in Osun State, Southwest Nigeria, particularly those in rural areas where community radio is a primary source of information. The population includes smallholder farmers engaged in various types of agriculture such as crop farming, livestock farming, and mixed farming.

A stratified random sampling technique was used to select participants. This technique ensures that different sub-groups of farmers, based on factors such as farming type (crop farming, livestock, or mixed farming), gender, and age, are adequately represented in the sample. The sample size was calculated using Cochran's formula for sample size determination, which is commonly used for survey research. However, the target sample size will be 400 farmers across the selected regions in Southwest Nigeria and data was collected using a structured questionnaire designed to gather information on farmers' demographics, their exposure to community radio programs, and the impact of these programs on their agricultural practices.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, a content validity approach was used and a pilot study was conducted with a small sample of farmers to test the clarity and relevance of the

questions. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or above which is considered acceptable, indicating that the items in the survey are reliably measuring the same construct. Data was analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The analysis summarizes the demographic data and key characteristics of the respondents, and means was calculated.

Limitations and Biases

While the survey method provides valuable data, several limitations and biases may affect the results of the study like respondents may overestimate or underestimate their engagement with radio programs or the changes in their farming practices due to social desirability bias, which could lead to inaccurate responses. The study will focus only on farmers in Southwest Nigeria, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions of Nigeria or West Africa. The media landscape and agricultural practices may differ in other regions. Although stratified random sampling will be used, there could still be biases in the sample if some farmers in remote areas are inaccessible or unwilling to participate. This may affect the representativeness of the sample.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the findings from the survey conducted to explore the impact of community radio on agricultural development in Southwest Nigeria. The data collected through structured questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results are presented in tables and interpreted based on the research objectives.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents include age, gender, farming type, and level of education. This section provides an overview of the sample's composition.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	250	62.5
	Female	150	37.5
Age	18–30 years	80	20.0
	31–50 years	240	60.0
	Above 50 years	80	20.0
Farming Type	Crop farming	200	50.0
	Livestock farming	120	30.0
	Mixed farming	80	20.0
Education Level	No formal education	90	22.5
	Primary education	150	37.5
	Secondary education	110	27.5
	Tertiary education	50	12.5

Source Field: Survey 2024

The majority of respondents (62.5%) are male, suggesting that male farmers might have greater access to community radio. This aligns with the findings of Iroegbu and Akintunde (2020), who noted that gender dynamics often influence access to agricultural information in rural areas. Furthermore, most respondents fall within the 31–50 age range (60%), indicating that community radio appeals to middle-aged farmers who are likely to be more active in agriculture. The level of education also shows that a significant number of farmers have limited formal education, highlighting the importance of using simplified language and culturally relevant content, as emphasized by Moemeka (1990) in his discussion of rural communication.

Listening Habits of Respondents

This section examines respondents' frequency of listening to community radio, preferred programs, and the time spent listening.

Table 2: Listening Habits of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Frequency of Listening	Daily	280	70.0
	Weekly	100	25.0
	Rarely	20	5.0
Preferred Programs	Agricultural programs	220	55.0
	News	100	25.0
	Entertainment	80	20.0
Time Spent Listening	Less than 1 hour/day	120	30.0
	1–2 hours/day	200	50.0
	More than 2 hours/day	80	20.0

Source Field: Survey 2024

A significant majority (70%) listen to community radio daily, with agricultural programs being the most preferred (55%). This supports Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (1962), which posits that mass media channels like radio are effective in disseminating innovations to target populations. The finding that most respondents spend 1–2 hours daily on radio programs aligns with the assertion by Ojebode (2015) that rural farmers dedicate substantial time to listening to radio for practical knowledge.

Impact of Community Radio on Agricultural Practices

This section presents findings on how community radio influences farming practices, including knowledge acquisition, adoption of innovations, and productivity improvements.

Table 3: Impact of Community Radio on Agricultural Practices

Variable	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Increased knowledge of new farming techniques	60	30	5	3	2
Adoption of innovative farming methods	50	40	5	4	1
Improved crop yield	55	35	5	4	1
Enhanced decision-making in farming	52	38	6	3	1

Source Field: Survey 2024

The results show that a combined 90% of respondents agree or strongly agree that community radio has increased their knowledge of new farming techniques. This finding supports the work of Ansari and Singh (2012), who highlighted that community radio serves as a tool for knowledge dissemination, especially in rural agricultural communities. Similarly, the high percentage of respondents (85%) adopting innovative methods through radio programming aligns with Agbamu (2006), who emphasized the role of media in promoting agricultural extension practices. These results underscore the critical role of radio in improving crop yields and decision-making among farmers.

Challenges in Accessing Community Radio

Table 4: Challenges in Accessing Community Radio

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Poor signal quality	140	35.0
Limited access to radios	80	20.0
Inadequate agricultural content	50	12.5
High cost of radios	30	7.5
Other	100	25.0

Source Field: Survey 2024

Poor signal quality is the most frequently reported challenge (35%), reflecting infrastructure issues that affect the reach of community radio, as noted by Oyero (2007). Limited access to radios (20%) highlights economic barriers, suggesting a need for affordable radio devices, as advocated by McAnany (2012) in his work on mass communication for development.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from this study provide critical insights into the role of community radio in enhancing agricultural practices among farmers. The demographic data (Table 1) indicates that the majority of respondents are male (62.5%), a trend that aligns with Iroegbu and Akintunde (2020), who observed that men in rural settings often have greater access to agricultural information due to entrenched gender roles and access disparities. This suggests that future radio programming should be more inclusive by considering strategies that increase female farmers' engagement, possibly through gender-sensitive broadcasting schedules and content.

In terms of age distribution, the largest group of respondents (60%) falls within the 31–50 age range, indicating that community radio primarily appeals to middle-aged farmers who are actively involved in agricultural activities. This demographic is likely to be more receptive to innovation and capable of implementing new techniques learned from radio broadcasts. Furthermore, the data reveals that a significant portion of respondents (60%) have no more than a primary school education, underscoring the necessity for community radio content to be delivered in simple language and local dialects. This finding supports Moemeka's (1990) assertion that development communication in rural contexts must be culturally and linguistically appropriate to be effective.

The listening habits of respondents (Table 2) further emphasize the central role of community radio in their daily lives. An overwhelming 70% of respondents report listening to the radio daily, with 55% preferring agricultural programs. This preference highlights the relevance of

community radio as a primary source of agricultural knowledge. According to Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory (1962), mass media, particularly radio, is a powerful tool for spreading new ideas and practices. The fact that most respondents dedicate between one and two hours daily to radio listening also confirms Ojebode's (2015) assertion that rural audiences invest significant time in media consumption for developmental purposes.

The impact of community radio on agricultural practices is substantial (Table 3). A combined 90% of respondents strongly agree or agree that community radio has increased their knowledge of new farming techniques. Similarly, 85% reported adopting innovative farming methods, while 90% noted improvements in crop yields and farming decisions. These outcomes reinforce the findings of Ansari and Singh (2012) and Agbamu (2006), who emphasized the media's potential to influence positive agricultural outcomes. The high level of agreement among respondents suggests that community radio serves not only as an information channel but also as a catalyst for behavioral change and increased agricultural productivity.

Despite these positive outcomes, the study also reveals significant challenges (Table 4). Poor signal quality, cited by 35% of respondents, remains the most common barrier to accessing community radio. This issue reflects infrastructural limitations in rural areas, a concern also raised by Oyero (2007). Additionally, 20% of respondents reported limited access to radio devices, indicating that economic constraints hinder the reach of radio-based agricultural information. These findings point to a need for targeted interventions, such as improving signal infrastructure and distributing affordable radios, in line with McAnany's (2012) recommendations for sustainable communication development.

Conclusion

This study explored the impact of community radio on agricultural development in Southwest Nigeria. The findings indicate that community radio is a significant tool for disseminating agricultural information, promoting innovation, and improving farming practices. A large proportion of respondents affirmed that radio programs enhance their knowledge of modern farming techniques, encourage the adoption of innovative methods, and contribute to improved productivity. These results underscore the potential of community radio as a platform for addressing agricultural challenges, particularly in rural areas. By focusing on participatory and inclusive communication strategies, community radio has emerged as a critical tool for fostering agricultural transformation in the region.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Improvement of signal quality: The government and radio stations should invest in infrastructure to enhance signal strength and expand the reach of community radio to remote areas.
2. Development of contextualized agricultural programs: Program developers should collaborate with agricultural experts to create culturally relevant and practical content tailored to the specific needs of local farmers.
3. Capacity building for broadcasters: Broadcasters should be trained to effectively communicate agricultural innovations and use local languages to engage the target audience.

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