Experience and **satisfaction evaluation** in fashion **events**

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Abstract | Fashion events contribute to the enhancement of cities and regions as tourism destinations. The aim of this study is to understand the influence of the individual profile and characteristics of the trip in the evaluation of the experience considering the participation in fashion events and understand the influence of the experience of participation in the event, in the evaluation of the experience and the degree of satisfaction with the event. On the empirical side, using a quantitative methodology, the research presents a case study, investigating the relationship between the dimensions individual profile, characteristics of the trip, experience, current experience and satisfaction. Main findings show that Individual Profile, Characteristics of the Trip and Participation in Event positively affects the Evaluation of Experience, and Participations, the authors suggest the existence of a mutual effect between the Individual Profile, the Characteristics of the Trip and the Knowledge and Participation in previous editions with the way that participants of fashion events will experience and evaluate their satisfaction regarding the event.

Keywords | Fashion tourism, events, trip characteristics, previous travel experience, satisfaction

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1. Introduction

The fashion event tourism has been assuming a remarkable emphasis in recent years, namely promotional events (Fashion weeks, showcases, fairs and exhibitions) (Jansson & Power, 2010) where designers and fashion companies present their new collections (Aiello, Donvito, Grazzini & Petrucci, 2016). Fashion tourism is characterized by the fact that visitors choose destinations that meet their needs regarding their shopping desires and participation in fashion events (Bada, 2013).

As for fashion events, the wide range of motivations that lead to the growth of the number of participants, include meeting designers, brands, and new collections, as well as following trends. Many participants are motivated by professional reasons, since they collaborate in the organization of the event itself, or because they intend to know the work and keep up with the strategies used by colleagues and competitors in the sector (Chilese & Russo, 2008).

Fashion events represent the place where new trends are presented for the first time and the occasion where partnerships and trade take place (Jansson & Power, 2010). An event consists in an experience strategically organized to create an impact on the lives of each of its participants (Silvers, 2004). Thus, it is relevant to know the impact of the individual profile of the participants, as well as the characteristics of the trip in the evaluation of the experience associated with the event. It is also decisive to analyse how the knowledge and experience of participation in previous editions influence the evaluation of the experience as well as the degree of satisfaction associated with it.

This paper is divided in three parts. The first part, the literature review, emphasizes different approaches to the definition of fashion events, experience, and satisfaction evaluation. The second part describes the research methodology of data collection, and the results of the research are presented and discussed. The third and final part, the conclusion, discusses the innovative perspective introduced in the analysis of fashion events evaluation, from a tourism perspective.

2. Literature review

2.1. Participants individual profile and characteristics of the trip

Age and gender are factors that determine consumer behaviour towards fashion products (Elliot, 1994; Auty & Elliot, 1998) and fashion events. As for age, younger people are usually more aware of the theme of fashion (Davis & Lennon, 1985; O'Cass, 2001).

Also, the behavioural differences between men and women concerning fashion have been studied by several authors who argue that women are more aware and more interested in fashion than men (Bloch, 1981; Solomon & Schopler, 1982) and more attentive to industry news, showing curiosity in experimenting with new styles and trends (Davis, 1994; O'Cass, 2004). In fact, expectations of gender behaviour in the face of fashion are changing (Gentry, 2003), as more and more men show the same interest in the fashion industry. However, the market continues to perpetuate and develop a strong connection with female consumers (Sassatelli, 2007). Event tourists, including fashion event tourists, whose main motivation to visit the destination lies in participating in the event, usually spend more time in the destination, spend more and travel in groups, which characterizes them as a very lucrative market segment (Yoon, Spencer, Holecek & Kim, 2000; Tang & Turco, 2001; Gentry, Commuri & Jun, 2003).

2.2. Experience

An experience, because of an event, promo-

tes sensations, emotions, behaviours, and relational values that replace functional values (Gibson, Willming & Hodnak, 2003). Some authors believe that factors, others than functional ones, such as personal, psychological, social, emotional and lifestyle factors have a relevant impact on consumer behaviour (Jones & Li, 2015).

In fact, some studies state the existence of a pre-experience, which corresponds to previously created expectations. All experiences are influenced by motivations and expectations. Remaining in the memory of individuals, the experiences create motivations and trends. Thus, the study of experience is decisive since it explains the consumer behaviour (Schmitt, 1999). Experimental marketing necessarily involves the participation of the consumer (Kotler & Keller, 2006), so consumers are both consumers and creators in an experience, constantly adding value to it, revealing, in this perspective, the most important asset in an event.

The experiences encompass the motivations, expectations, and attitudes of an individual towards the event, as well as her/his reflections after the event, which will determine his future behaviour (Fiore, Niehm, Oh, Jeong & Hausafus, 2007). Each event, of any kind, is based on experience and its main objective is to offer its participants moments, emotions, and positive sensations (Srinivasan & Srivastava, 2010). The evaluation of the experience should be based on the sensations, learning and emotions that an event allows its participants to feel, as well as on the attitudes they had before, during and after the event (Getz, 2008).

2.3. Satisfaction

Satisfaction is defined as the result of the difference between expectations and experience performance (Richards & Lanuza, 2017). Consumer satisfaction is an assessment of experience in its entirety (Mahmetoglu & Engen, 2011). Satisfaction is based on the comparison between the performance of a product/service and the customer's previous expectations. Each experience is unique and, therefore, after experiencing each one, the individual will feel a different level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction, to the extent that their expectations have been reached or not (Yuksel & Yuksel, 2011).

Satisfaction is defined as the feeling of pleasure that results from the positive performance of an experience and that reaches or exceeds the expectations previously created (Anderson, Fornel & Lehmann, 1994). Satisfaction is also associated with affective and cognitive processes (Cuadrado-García, Pérez-Cabañero & Montoro-Pons, 2017). Thus, satisfaction is based on emotions experienced during the tourism event and memories of past experiences, which, in turn, have an impact on present and future behaviors. The satisfaction assessment allows us to understand whether the experience lived corresponded to expectations, if it fell short of them or if it exceeded them (Kotler & Armstorng, 2010; Wong, Musa & Michaelis, 2017).

Satisfaction regarding events results from the comparison between the participants' expectations and their actual experience (Prayag, 2009). It concerns its quality, perceived by its participants and is dependent on experience (Parasuraman, Zeithalm & Berry, 1985; Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnel, 2006).

2.4. Case study

The city of Oporto is the second largest city of Portugal and the most representative in the northern region of the country. Over the last few years there has been a positive development of the city of Oporto as a tourism destination, increasing its recognition internationally.

The city of Oporto has been working in a re-

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markable way regarding its positioning on the European map. In fact, in addiction to winning international distinction, it has achieved a position of European destination. Oporto was considered the Best European Destination in 2012, 2014 and 2017 – a distinction awarded annually by European Consumers Choice. This distinction offers attractiveness and notoriety to the city of Oporto as a tourism destination, also revealing itself as a potential for economic growth of the region.

Indeed, the tourism sector has shown significant growth not only in the city of Oporto, but throughout the North of Portugal, supported by its historical, cultural, natural, architectural, and gastronomic heritage, attracting, increasingly, a greater number of visitors (ERTPN, 2017). The northern region is also the core of the Portuguese fashion industry. In fact, most of the companies of the textile sector are located there.

The city of Oporto is the stage of several fashion events, including Porto Fashion Week and Portugal Fashion, which are effectively two of the main Portuguese fashion events, as well as in the Iberian Peninsula. The city of Oporto can offer favourable tourist infrastructure conditions visioning fashion events, including climate, infrastructure and equipment, a diversity of complementary leisure activities and good communications network.

3. Methodology

The objectives of the present research are to understand the influence of the individual profile and characteristics of the trip in the evaluation of the experience of participation in fashion events; and understand the influence of the experience of participation in the event, in the evaluation of the experience and the degree of satisfaction with the event.

Therefore, four hypotheses were developed:

- H1: The individual profile positively influences the evaluation of the current experience.

- H2: The characteristics of the trip positively influence the current experience evaluation.

- H3: Participation in a fashion event positively influences the participations' evaluation of the experience.

- H4: Participation in a fashion event positively influences the degree of satisfaction with the event.

To fulfil both objectives of this research, a quantitative methodology was applied, and a survey was used as a data collection instrument. 410 questionnaires were collected near to the participants of six fashion events held in the city of Oporto between September 27th, 2019, and February 20th, 2020.

Table 1 | Number of Questionnaires

Event	Collection Date	No. Questionnaires
PortoFashionWeek NightOut	27/09/2019	20
MODtísssimo 54	2-3/10/2019	100
Portugal Fashion SS20	23-26/10/2019	150
Sustainability Talks	5/12/2019	20
Concurso Jovens Designers	13/12/2019	20
MODtísssimo 55	19-20/02/2020	100

Source: Own elaboration

The structure of the questionnaire was divided in seven distinct parts, including the dimensions: Individual Profile, Characteristics of the Trip, Event (knowledge and participation in previous editions), Motivation, Experience, Satisfaction and Loyalty (regarding the event and destination). The collected data were analysed using the SPSS program, version 24.

4. Results

To respond to the objectives of this study and its hypotheses, the data collected through the questionnaires were analysed using SPSS, version 24. The analysis involved the dimensions Individual Profile, Travel Characteristics, Current Experience, Previous Experience and Satisfaction. On average, the agreement is higher for "During the event I felt in good spirits", followed by "The fact that the event took place in the city of Porto improved my experience", "The event allowed me to get to know more about the work of several professionals", "The atmosphere of the event is welcoming and stimulating"(Table 2).

Given the importance of the consumer experience, the introduction of experiential marketing strategies allows increasing positive emotions, as well as increasing the degree of satisfaction and thus positively influencing consumer behaviour. Experiential marketing uses sensory and symbolic stimuli to create emotional responses during the decision-making process (Schmitt, 1999; Tsaur, Chiu, & Wang, 2007). The effectiveness of experiential marketing depends on how these stimuli are perceived and influence decision-making through mental image processing (Escalas, 2004). Experiential marketing stimuli are designed as a strategy to influence tourists' behaviour (Babin & Burns, 1997; Petrova & Cialdini, 2008).

	Ν	Average	St. Dv.	Coef. Var.
The event allowed me to meet designers and brands I didn't know	409	3,35	1,16	35%
The event allowed me to know the new trends	410	3,37	1,12	33%
The event allowed me to get to know better the work of several professionals	409	3,60	1,03	28%
The event enriched my knowledge	410	3,46	1,05	30%
The event stimulated my curiosity	410	3,51	1,09	31%
The atmosphere of the event is welcoming and stimulating	410	3,59	1,00	28%
The activities developed at the event are dynamic and creative	410	3,29	1,03	31%
The event appealed to my sensations	408	3,22	1,05	33%
The event appealed to my creative thinking	410	3,32	1,09	33%
At the event I felt identified with the world of fashion	410	3,55	1,08	30%
During the event I felt in good spirits	410	3,87	0,95	25%
The event surprised me	410	3,13	1,18	38%
The event captivated me	410	3,38	1,06	31%
I got involved in the event	410	3,41	1,04	31%
Actively participated in the event	410	3,55	1,13	32%
During the event I didn't know how much time to pass	410	3,35	1,26	37%
I want to share my experience	410	3,53	1,19	34%
I took photos and recorded videos to share on social networks	410	3,36	1,48	44%
I want to buy pieces from designers/brands present at the event	410	2,64	1,42	54%
Participation in the event allowed me to get to know (better) the city of Oporto	410	2,48	1,46	59%
The fact that the event took place in the city of Porto improved my experience	410	3,64	1,30	36%

Table 2 | Participants' experiences on the current event

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outputs

Table 3 | Rate of the degree of satisfaction with the several aspects of the Event

	Ν	Average	St. Dv.	Var. Coef.
Organization	389	3,39	0,65	19%
Location	405	3,48	0,66	19%
Spaces	397	3,45	0,65	19%
Accessibility	399	3,41	0,70	21%
Facilities/Support Services	399	3,50	0,58	17%
Timetables	402	3,41	0,66	19%
Environment	398	3,47	0,57	16%
Staff	394	3,55	0,56	16%
Promotion/Dissemination	382	3,29	0,67	20%
Developed Activities	368	3,24	0,64	20%
Relationship of the Event with the City of Porto	370	3,32	0,75	22%
Global Event Assessment	396	3.47	0.56	16%

The values indicated refer to the measurement scale: 1- Very dissatisfied;2- Dissatisfied; 3- Satisfied; 4- Very satisfied

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outputs

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As results presented in table 3, satisfaction is higher to "Staff", "Facilities/Support Services", "Location", "Environment", "Global Event Assessment"and "Spaces", followed by "Accessibility", "Schedules/timetables" and "Organization", followed by "Relationship of the Event with the City of Porto" and "Promotion/Dissemination", and finally "Developed Activities", having all items an average value much higher than the midpoint of the scale.

Regarding H1 and H2, it was verified how the Individual Profile and the Characteristics of the Trip influence the Evaluation of the Experience.

		Ν	Average	ST. Dv.	t	р
Gender	Female Male	292 118	3,45 3,30	,807 ,733	1,755	0,080
Age	18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 or more	117 1000 91 67 28 7	3,56 3,19 3,32 3,61 3,34 3,60	,726 ,761 ,755 ,802 ,960 1,003	3,653	**0,003
Marital State	Single Married Divorced	231 143 36	3,41 3,44 3,27	,778 ,789 ,854	,708	0,493
Qualifications	Middle-school High school College	8 108 294	3,83 3,45 3,38	,743 ,816 ,778	1,411	0,245
Residence	Portugal Foreign	356 54	3,34 3,84	,775 ,742	-4,435	**0,000
Residence in Metropolitan Area of Oporto	No Yes	213 197	3,46 3,35	,812 ,759	1,462	0,145
Individual Net Monthly Income	Don't have Until €1500 €1501-3000 €3001-5000 €5001 or more Don't know/answer	64 169 64 16 16 81	3,45 3,31 3,54 3,79 3,69 3,35	,851 ,763 ,680 ,711 ,955 ,816	2,255	*0,048

Table 4 | Individual profile of the participants on the current event

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outputs ** p < 0.01 * p < 0.05

Table 5 Pai	rticipants' characteris	stics of	the trip	on the cu	rrent ev	ent
		N	Average	ST. Dv.	t	р
1 st time visiting the	Yes	192	3,44	,814	-1,138	0,257
city	No	21	3,65	,783	1,150	0,207
	Alone	43	3,47	,779		
	Couple	27	3,40	,759		
Who travel with you	Relatives	25	3,65	,832	3,831	**0,005
	Friends	33	3,87	,763		
	Co-workers	85	3,27	,805		
	Nobody	44	3,48	,774		
How many people	1	94	3,31	,774	3,541	*0,016
came with you	2-3	56	3,56	,809	0,0 11	0,010
	4 or more	19	3,92	,927		
Travel Organization	Independent	167	3,38	,823	-3,064	**0.002
	Organized	46	3,78	,687	-,	-,
	Own car	128	3,31	,774		
	Plane	51	3,83	,734		
Means of transport	Train	16	3,84	,909	7,600	**0,000
	Other	18	3,14	,789		
	Don't stay	98	3,32	,837		
	1-2 nights	56	3,47	,756	0.505	**0.000
Average stay	3-5 nights	47	3,58	,773	3,535	**0,008
	6-10 nights	5	3,47	,409		
	More than 10	6	3,93	,721		
	Don't stav	94	3,35	,826		
	Hotel	71	3,73	,775		
	Inn	3	3,09	,577		
Accommodation	Local Accommodation	16	3,53	,837	3,354	*0,004
	Relatives House	20	3,18	,631		
	Own house 2 nd habitation	4	3,87	,655		
	Other	5	2,66	,649		
	Event	201	3,46	,823		
	Leisure	8	3,63	,667		
Main reason of the trip	Professional reasons	2	3,97	,186	,469	0,758
·	Visit Friends and Relatives	2	3,03	,558		
	Other	2	3,20	,757		

Table 5 | Participants' characteristics of the trip on the current event

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outputs ** p < 0.01 * p < 0.05

Regarding the Experience dimension, analysed in hypothesis H2: the Experience is superior for those who travel with friends compared to those who travel with co- workers; the Experience is superior for those traveling with 4 or more compared to those traveling with 1; with regard to the organization of the Trip, the Experience is more valued for those who organized the trip independently; concerning the means of transport in which tourist's travelled, the Experience is superior to those who have travelled by plane compared to those who have travelled by car or other; for average stay, the Experience is superior for those who spend 6 to 10 nights compared to those who didn't; regarding to where tourists are staying, the Experience is superior for those who are in hotel compared to those who do not overnight.

Subsequently, the impact of knowledge and participation in previous editions of the event in the Experience Evaluation was analysed, as well as in the Degree of Satisfaction (H3 and H4), as observed in table 6 and table 7.

		Ν	Average	ST. Dv.	t	р
Know the event	I already knew it Webiste Media Specialized press Mupis Social Media Friends and Relatives Other	286 4 6 8 30 38 32	3,37 3,61 3,45 3,43 3,59 3,54 3,46 3,51	,464 ,454 ,437 ,453 ,291 ,438 ,460 ,421	1,220	0,290
How many times participated in previous editions	Never 1 2-3 4-6 7 or more	177 40 101 39 51	3,48 3,36 3,38 3,31 3,34	,439 ,402 ,467 ,544 ,443	2,212	0,067
In how many fashion events participated in 2018?	No one 1 2-3 4-6 7 or more	132 51 124 46 55	3,33 3,43 3,44 3,39 3,55	,429 ,403 ,451 ,556 ,462	2,707	*0,030
How many days participate in the event?	1 2 3 4	132 182 60 34	3,47 3,33 3,50 3,45	,418 ,485 ,459 ,380	3,549	*0,015

Table 6 | Current experience versus past experiences in the same event. Relationship between the dimensions Event and Experience

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outputs ** p < 0.01 * p < 0.05

In the sample, the Experience is verified more for those who participated 4-6 times previously, and less for those who participated 2-3, satisfaction is verified more for those who did not participate and less for those who participated 4-6, but the differences observed are not statistically significant. Also, the experience evaluation is more valued for those who participated 3 or 4 days and less for those who participated 2 days, and the differences were statistically significant (p<0.001), significantly higher for those who participated 1, 3 or 4 days compared to those who participated 2 days (Tukey test: p<0.05). In the sample, the Experience is mostly valued for those who became aware of the event by specialized press, posters and mupis and social networks and less for those who already knew the event; Satisfaction is more valued for those who took knowledge of the event by website and less for those who already knew the event.

		Ν	Average	ST. Dv.	t	р
Know the event	I already knew it Website Media Specialized press Mupis Social Media Friends and Relatives Other	286 4 6 8 30 38 32	3,37 3,61 3,45 3,43 3,59 3,54 3,46 3,51	,464 ,454 ,437 ,453 ,291 ,438 ,460 ,421	1,220	0,290
How many times participated in previous editions	Never 1 2-3 4-6 7 or more	177 40 101 39 51	3,48 3,36 3,38 3,31 3,34	,439 ,402 ,467 ,544 ,443	2,212	0,067
In how many fashion events participated in 2018?	No one 1 2-3 4-6 7 or more	132 51 124 46 55	3,33 3,43 3,44 3,39 3,55	,429 ,403 ,451 ,556 ,462	2,707	*0,030
How many days participate in the event?	1 2 3 4	132 182 60 34	3,47 3,33 3,50 3,45	,418 ,485 ,459 ,380	3,549	*0,015

Table 7 | Relationship between the dimensions Event and Satisfaction

Source: Own elaboration based on SPSS outputs ** p < 0.01 * p < 0.05

Satisfaction is more valued for those who participated 7 or more and less for those who did not participate, and the differences were statistically significant (p=0.030), significantly higher for those who participated 7 or more compared to those who did not participate (Tukey test: p=0.030); also, for those who participated 1 or 3 days and less for those who participated 2 days, and the differences were statistically significant (p=0.015), significantly higher for those who participated 2 days (Tukey test: p=0.037).

5. Conclusion

The data collected answered the objectives of the present study and confirm the four hypotheses formulated. Regarding the objective "Understanding the influence of the individual profile and characteristics of the trip in the evaluation of the experience of participation in fashion events": The hypothesis "The individual profile positively influences the evaluation of the experience" was verified. Regarding the Experience dimension, analysed in this hypothesis: the Experience is superior for 18-24 and 45-54 years; for residents abroad and for individual illiquid income between €3001-5000.

The hypothesis "The characteristics of the trip positively influence the evaluation of the experience" was verified. Regarding the Experience dimension, analysed in this hypothesis: the Experience is superior for those who travel with friends compared to those who travel with co-workers; is superior for those traveling with 4 or more compared to those traveling with 1; with regard to the organization of the trip, there is more for those who organized the trip independently; is superior to those who have travelled by plane compared to those who have travelled in their own or other vehicles; is superior for those who spend 6 to 10 nights overnight.

For the objective "Understanding the influence of the experience of participation in the event in the evaluation of the experience and the degree of satisfaction with the event": The hypothesis "Participation in the event positively influences the evaluation of the experience" was verified. For how many days participates in the event, the Experience is superior for those who participated 1, 2 or 4 days compared to those who participated 2 days.

The hypothesis "Participation in the event positively influences the degree of satisfaction with the event" was verified. Satisfaction is higher for those who participated 7 or more times in previous editions compared to those who did not participate; regarding how many days participates in the event, Satisfaction is higher for those who participated 1 day compared to those who participated 2 days.

Thus, it is possible to confirm that the individual profile, the characteristics of the trip and the participation in the event positively influence the evaluation of the experience, as well as the participation in the event positively influences the degree of satisfaction in relation to the event.

In fact, events can make destinations more attractive and active, as they break the routine of a city (Liu & Chen, 2007) and allow the desired development of a locality or region and its various compositions (Getz & Page, 2016). Fashion destinations are recognized for their status (Gilbert, 1990) and thus can be different from their competitors since they are not easily replaceable and have unique functional and symbolic attributes (Hankison, 2004) that make them known worldwide (Phillips & Back, 2011; Lewis, Kerr, & Burgess, 2013). Fashion events are part of the local and regional tourism strategy if they have the capacity to internationalize and promote the city of Porto and the North region as tourism destinations.

According to Getz (2005, 2013), any event should be organized and developed based on joint strategies to improve the development of a destination according to its main needs and priorities. In fact, it is in-root that the events are conceived, designed, and carried out, in a strategic perspective, so that the outcomes are maximized and distributed by the several stakeholders of the destination (O'Brien & Chalip, 2007; Chalip, 2014; Smith, 2014; Kelly & Fairley, 2018).

Fashion events can add value to the city of Porto and are directly related to its image and personality of city and its active, cultured, and cosmopolitan lifestyle. There is a concern, on the part of the organization of these events, concerning the improvement of tourism resources and emblematic places of the city.

Over time, local governments and institutions have begun to perish the role of fashion as a creator of identity and strategic advantage, since fashion events attract many visitors, promoting the aesthetic and creative characteristics of a city (Kalbaska, Ayala Ramírez, & Cantoni, 2018), emerging as differentiating elements, capable of adding value to a destination, in an increasingly competitive tourist market (Weller, 2008; Kalbaska, Ayala Ramírez, & Cantoni, 2018). Thus, fashion events are crucial in the process of promoting a world-class tourism destination and attracting many visitors (Getz, 2013; Ziakas, 2014) offering the city the opportunity to achieve direct and indirect economic and social benefits (Weller, 2008; Kalbaska, Ayala Ramírez, & Cantoni, 2018).

In a strategic approach to sensitize the DMOs to a more effective focus on fashion events and on programmes to enhance fashion event tourism, programme proposals must be studied, developed, and presented, capable of guaranteeing a complementary offer at the destination, in coincidence with the fashion events, to ensure a longer stay and better evaluation of loyalty, concerning the destination, in the intention of recommendation and repeating.

It will be crucial to raise DMOs' awareness for a more effective focus on fashion events and on fashion events tourism valorisation programmes, as a strategy for destination valorisation and behavioural intentions with better performance, by events visitors.

The relationships between the local players of a tourism destination enable its sustainable development, increase competitiveness and ensure the success of rejuvenation strategies (Skinner, 2000; Tinsley & Lynch, 2001; Faulkner & Tideswell, 2006).

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