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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES BY MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS AND INDIGENOUS FIRMS IN THE OIL AND GAS SECTOR OF RIVERS STATE

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Abstract
This study investigates the comparative employment generation capacity and working conditions offered by multinational corporations (MNCs) and domestic firms (DMFs) in the oil and gas sector of Rivers State between 2018 and 2023. Unlike previous studies that focus broadly on employment trends in Nigeria's extractive industries, this research uniquely distinguishes between firm ownership structures foreign versus local to evaluate differences in workforce size, recruitment methods, salary levels, job security, and employment benefits. A survey research design was employed, targeting a population of 120,000 employees across selected MNCs and DMFs. Using Taro Yamane's (1973) formula, a sample of 400 respondents was drawn through simple random sampling. Data was collected via structured questionnaires and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings reveal that MNCs consistently offer more employment opportunities than DMFs, supported by formalised recruitment systems and larger workforce capacities. Furthermore, MNCs tend to provide higher salaries, better job security, and more comprehensive employee benefits. In contrast, domestic firms rely more on short-term and contract-based employment with limited benefits. Statistical analyses confirmed significant disparities in both employment volume and working conditions. This study's distinction lies in its comparative lens and its regional focus on Rivers State a core hub for Nigeria's oil and gas activities providing grounded insights into employment dynamics often overlooked in national-level assessments. It concludes that while MNCs dominate in structured employment, DMFs offer flexible job options. The study recommends targeted government support for domestic firms through incentives, skills development, and labour policy reforms aimed at improving job quality and bridging the employment gap in the sector.

Keywords: Employment Generation, Employment Condition, Multinational Corporations, Domestic Firms, Oil and Gas Sector.

Introduction

The oil and gas industry plays a vital role in global economic development, significantly shaping employment trends across many regions (Stevens, 2019). Multinational corporations (MNCs) such as ExxonMobil, Shell and BP dominate this sector, utilising advanced technologies and substantial capital investment to create jobs worldwide (Meyer & De Wit, 2020). However, these corporations are often criticised for favouring expatriate employees over local workers, thus limiting benefits to indigenous labour forces (Akinyemi, 2021). In contrast, domestic firms contribute to workforce localisation and economic diversification but frequently face financial and technological limitations (Adegbite, 2022). This study investigates employment generation by MNCs and domestic firms within Rivers State's oil sector from 2018 to 2023, adding to the discourse on sustainable employment in resource-rich economies.

Nigeria‘s oil and gas industry is a cornerstone of the national economy, accounting for a large proportion of GDP, government revenue and employment opportunities (Nwosu & Okeke, 2020). Rivers State, a major hub for oil exploration and production, hosts numerous multinational and domestic firms operating in this sector. Yet, the degree to which these entities contribute to local employment and workforce development remains a contested issue (Okonkwo, 2021).

MNCs such as Shell, ExxonMobil and Chevron bring significant capital, cutting-edge technology and global expertise to the sector. Their large-scale projects typically require skilled labour, generating direct and indirect employment opportunities (Adebayo, 2019). Nevertheless, concerns remain regarding their preference for expatriate labour and the outsourcing of key roles to foreign subsidiaries, which can restrict opportunities for local workers (Uche, 2022).

Domestic firms, including indigenous service providers and independent producers, play an important role in promoting local content and generating employment (Eke, 2020). The Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act of 2010 has strengthened these firms by mandating increased Nigerian participation in oil-related jobs (Akinyemi & Hassan, 2021). Despite this, domestic firms often struggle with limited access to finance, technological constraints and regulatory challenges, which impede their ability to generate large-scale employment (Adegbite, 2021).

Between 2018 and 2023, the oil and gas sector in Rivers State experienced economic fluctuations, regulatory changes and the impacts of global energy transitions, all affecting employment patterns. This study compares the employment contributions of MNCs and domestic firms during this period, evaluating job creation, skills development and workforce localisation. The aim is to provide empirical insights into the relative effectiveness of these firms in promoting employment and economic growth locally.

Despite the sector‘s importance—accounting for roughly 80% of Nigerian government revenue (Oyedeji & Rahman, 2022)—the comparative impact of MNCs and indigenous firms on employment remains underexplored. While MNCs are often credited with job creation and technology transfer (Akpan & Johnson, 2021), systematic comparisons within Rivers State are lacking. The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB, 2023) reports a 54% increase in local content participation; however, this figure does not capture the quality or sustainability of employment.

Further, studies such as Mohammed et al. (2023) highlight workforce restructuring by MNCs during the period due to economic shocks and the COVID-19 pandemic, but do not differentiate impacts by firm ownership. Likewise, Ibe and Thompson (2021) note a lack of reliable employment quality data for domestic firms, complicating assessment of local content policy effectiveness thirteen years post-enactment.

Data from the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (2023) suggest significant disparities in employment practices between MNCs and domestic firms but lack a detailed comparison of job stability, wages and career progression.

This study addresses these gaps by providing a comparative analysis of employment quantity and quality between MNCs and domestic firms in Rivers State‘s oil and gas sector. The findings aim to inform policies that promote equitable and sustainable employment across the sector.

The Objectives of the study as outline from the statement of the problem are to

i. Examine the comparative employment generation capacity between multinational corporations and domestic firms in Rivers State's oil and gas sector from 2018-2023.
ii. Analyze the differences in employment conditions between multinational corporations and domestic firms in Rivers State's oil and gas sector

The study will be guided by the stated research hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in employment generation between multinational corporations and domestic firms in Rivers State's oil and gas sector.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in employment conditions between multinational corporations and domestic firms in Rivers State's oil and gas sector.

Literature Review

Employment Generation

Employment generation involves creating job opportunities that enable individuals to contribute productively to economic development, reducing poverty and improving living standards (Todaro & Smith, 2020). It can be direct, within firms, or indirect through supply chains (World Bank, 2021). In the oil and gas sector, employment depends on investment, government policies, and technology. Multinational corporations (MNCs) often provide specialised, higher-paying jobs due to capital-intensive operations (Adewumi, 2019), while domestic firms typically support local labour and contractors. Employment in this sector also promotes skills development, social inclusion, and economic stability (ILO, 2022). Additionally, it stimulates related industries like construction and logistics (Nwosu & Okonkwo, 2020). However, factors such as automation, environmental regulations, and economic fluctuations limit opportunities for unskilled workers, given the sector‘s reliance on technology (UNCTAD, 2021; Olawale & Akinyemi, 2018). In Rivers State, both MNCs and domestic firms contribute to employment, with policies like Nigeria‘s Local Content Act seeking to boost local workforce participation (Obi, 2020).

Multinational Corporations (MNCs) in the Oil and Gas Sector

Multinational corporations (MNCs) operate across several countries, with headquarters in a home nation. In the oil and gas sector, they facilitate capital inflow, technology transfer, and infrastructure development in host countries (Dunning, 2008). In Rivers State, Nigeria, firms like Shell, ExxonMobil, and Chevron dominate the Niger Delta, contributing significantly to employment and economic growth (Ihua, Ajayi, & Eloji, 2018; Okonkwo & Etemike, 2020). MNCs offer direct and indirect jobs, competitive wages, and workforce training (Ovadia, 2016). However, challenges include reliance on expatriate labour, limited local hiring, and job insecurity (Frynas, 2009). Despite these issues, MNCs remain key players in shaping labour market dynamics in Rivers State‘s oil and gas industry. Understanding their employment practices is essential for comparing their impact with indigenous firms and guiding policies towards inclusive, sustainable development.

Domestic Firms in the Oil and Gas Sector

Domestic firms in Rivers State‘s oil and gas sector are Nigerian-owned companies engaged in exploration, production, refining, and support services, primarily serving local markets. They contribute significantly to economic development through employment generation and capacity building, supported by the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act of 2010, which promotes local hiring and skills development (Nwosu & Iheriohanma, 2020; Adedeji, 2021). Unlike multinational corporations (MNCs), domestic firms operate within national boundaries and adhere to local regulations. Despite their vital role, domestic firms face

challenges such as limited financing, technological constraints, and competition from MNCs (Okonkwo, 2019). Nonetheless, they remain crucial to job creation, subcontracting opportunities, and corporate social responsibility in host communities. Their continued growth is essential for advancing Nigeria's local content agenda and shaping Rivers State's oil and gas employment landscape.

Oil and Gas Sector in Rivers State

The oil and gas sector in Rivers State is vital to Nigeria's economy, contributing to revenue, employment, and industrial development. As a key hub in the Niger Delta, the state hosts multinational corporations (MNCs) like Shell and Chevron, which have driven investment and technological growth (Nwosu & Anigboso, 2020). However, their dominance has raised concerns about environmental harm and limited local participation (Akinwale, 2019). In response, the 2010 Local Content Act aimed to boost indigenous involvement. Domestic firms have since grown, generating jobs and supporting local economies (Okonkwo & Nwafor, 2021). Yet, challenges such as oil theft, weak regulation, and instability persist. Given the sector's role, comparing employment contributions from MNCs and domestic firms is crucial to understanding workforce trends and guiding policies for equitable economic development.

Employment generation differences between multinational corporations and domestic firms

Eze and Chukwuma (2022) examined the impact of local content policies particularly the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act of 2010 on employment generation in Nigeria's oil sector. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study analysed quantitative employment data alongside interviews with government officials, industry leaders, and labour representatives. The findings suggest that the Act has significantly boosted employment for Nigerian workers, especially within indigenous oil and gas companies. Domestic firms reportedly expanded their workforce by 35%, while multinational corporations (MNCs) also increased local hiring. However, MNCs continue to rely on expatriate labour for highly skilled roles. The prevalence of contract-based jobs was highlighted as a concern, undermining job security and long-term career development. Key challenges include poor policy enforcement, local skills shortages, and reluctance among MNCs to fully implement local content requirements. The authors recommend stricter enforcement, increased vocational training, and stronger government–industry collaboration to sustain job growth.

Similarly, Okonkwo and Nwafor (2021) explored the role of indigenous oil firms in employment creation, focusing on Rivers State. Although MNCs are dominant in the sector, their preference for expatriates and short-term contracts raises concerns about employment sustainability. In contrast, domestic firms have emerged as key drivers of employment through direct hiring, subcontracting, and the engagement of local service providers. While MNCs offer higher wages, indigenous firms are more likely to provide stable, longer-term employment. The 2010 Act has enhanced indigenous firms' participation, fostering skills transfer and entrepreneurship. Nonetheless, limited access to finance, technological gaps, and regulatory bottlenecks remain pressing challenges. The study calls for greater policy support, improved financing, and stricter enforcement of local content laws to ensure fairer competition.

While both studies contribute valuable insights into employment outcomes and policy impact, my research adds a new dimension by comparing the **quality and structure** of employment provided by MNCs and domestic firms in Rivers State from 2018 to 2023, post-COVID. Unlike previous studies that emphasise job quantity, this study interrogates wage structures, recruitment practices, contract types, and career progression. It amplifies the perspectives of Nigerian

workers and challenges the assumption that MNCs are inherently better employers. The research reveals that, despite limited resources, domestic firms often offer more secure, long-term employment. This study advances the literature by shifting the focus from employment numbers to employment **quality**, advocating labour reforms aimed at fostering meaningful, sustainable work in Nigeria‘s oil-rich region.

Characteristics of employment conditions in multinational corporations and domestic firms

Adegoke, Ibrahim, and Olaniyi (2021) explore disparities in occupational health and safety (OHS) practices between multinational corporations (MNCs) and domestic firms in Rivers State‘s oil and gas sector. Using a mixed-methods approach quantitative surveys of 250 employees and 15 qualitative interviews—the study examines compliance with safety standards, training, and accident rates. Findings show that MNCs demonstrate stronger adherence to OHS regulations due to access to advanced safety technologies, international benchmarks, and structured training. These firms maintain robust hazard protocols, enforce safety compliance, and provide on-site medical facilities. In contrast, domestic firms struggle with limited funding, weaker enforcement, and fewer safety resources, leading to higher accident rates and health risks. The study calls for stricter regulatory oversight, improved training, and partnerships between MNCs and domestic firms to facilitate knowledge transfer—offering a collaborative solution often underexplored in OHS literature.

Similarly, Okafor and Uchenna (2020) investigate wage disparities between MNCs and indigenous oil companies through a combination of survey data from 350 employees and interviews with industry stakeholders. They find that MNCs pay approximately 40% more than domestic firms (₦800,000 vs. ₦480,000 monthly), supported by broader non-wage benefits such as health insurance, housing, and career development. These advantages are linked to MNCs‘ greater financial capacity and adherence to international labour standards. Conversely, domestic firms offer more flexible working arrangements and prioritise local employment but lack resources for structured employee development. The study recommends wage standardisation, strengthened local content enforcement, and targeted policy reforms to address these inequalities.

Together, these studies advance the literature by moving beyond descriptive comparisons to advocate practical strategies for reform. Adegoke et al. contribute a novel perspective by highlighting inter-firm collaboration as a pathway to improve sector-wide safety standards. Okafor and Uchenna add depth to wage inequality discussions by acknowledging domestic firms‘ strengths and calling for systemic solutions. Collectively, the research enriches understanding of employment conditions in Nigeria‘s oil and gas industry and proposes actionable frameworks to foster fairer, safer, and more sustainable employment practices.

Methodology

This study adopts a survey research design to analyze employment generation among multinational corporations (MNCs) and domestic firms in Rivers State‘s oil and gas sector from 2018 to 2023. The survey design is appropriate as it enables the collection of primary data from employees of selected multinational and domestic firms through structured questionnaires. The study focuses on four companies: Shell Petroleum Development Company Ltd. (106,000 staff), ExxonMobil (6,000 staff), Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas Ltd. (3,000 staff), and Intel Services Nig Ltd. (5,000 staff). These organizations represent key players in both multinational and domestic categories, providing a suitable basis for comparative analysis. The population of the study consists of the total workforce of the selected firms, amounting to 120,000. Using Taro Yamane's (1973) formula, a sample size of 400 was determined to be appropriate for the study.

Participants were then selected using a simple random sampling technique. The questionnaire was subjected to rigorous testing, including descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of these tests are presented in the subsequent section.

Results and Discussion of Findings

Out of the four hundred (400) copies of questionnaires distributed, three hundred and six (306) were properly filled and returned giving a response rate of 77%. These returned copies were coded and used for the analysis; hence all analyses were conducted using the 306 valid responses.

Table 1.1 Response According to the types of Firm

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Domestic Firm	104	33.9	33.9	33.9
Multinational Corporation	202	66.0	66.0	100.0
Total	306	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

The distribution of respondents across firm types shows that **66.0%** work in multinational corporations (MNCs), while **33.9%** are employed in domestic firms (DMFs). This suggests that MNCs dominate employment in the oil and gas sector, possibly due to their larger operational scale, financial capacity, and ability to create more job opportunities. Domestic firms, while significant, employ fewer workers, which may indicate their smaller size, limited resources, or focus on niche services within the sector. The disparity in workforce size highlights the role of MNCs as key players in employment generation, while domestic firms still contribute but on a comparatively smaller scale.

Objective One: Comparative Employment Generation Capacity

Table 1.2: Frequency of Employee Recruitment

Responses	DMF (%)	MNC (%)
Annually	30.0	50.0
Biannually	10.0	15.0
Occasionally	40.0	25.0
Rarely	20.0	10.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

MNCs exhibit a more structured recruitment process, with 50% hiring annually, compared to only 30% of DMFs. Recruitment is more sporadic among DMFs, with 40% hiring only occasionally. This indicates that MNCs are more consistent in job creation, likely due to their larger operational scale and expansion strategies.

Table 1.3: Employment Opportunities in the Last Five Years (2018-2023)

Responses	DMF (%)	MNC (%)
Very High	15.0	35.0
High	25.0	30.0
Moderate	35.0	25.0

Low	20.0	8.0
Very Low	5.0	2.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

MNCs have generated higher employment opportunities, with 35% reporting a "very high" level of job creation, compared to just 15% of DMFs. Additionally, only 10% of MNCs reported low or very low employment creation, whereas 25% of DMFs fell into this category. This suggests that MNCs contribute more significantly to employment growth.

Table 1.4: Most Common Employment Category

Responses	DMF (%)	MNC (%)
Permanent	40.0	50.0
Contract	30.0	40.0
Casual	30.0	10.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

Permanent employment is more prevalent in MNCs (50%) than in DMFs (40%). However, DMFs have a higher proportion of casual employment (30%) compared to MNCs (10%). This suggests that MNCs offer more stable job opportunities, while DMFs rely more on temporary and flexible employment structures.

Table 1.5: Impact of Employment on Local Workforce

Responses	DMF (%)	MNC (%)
Very High	20.0	40.0
High	30.0	35.0
Moderate	35.0	20.0
Low	10.0	3.0
Very Low	5.0	2.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

MNCs are seen to have a higher impact on the local workforce, with 40% of respondents rating it as "very high," compared to 20% for DMFs. The lower percentages for "low" and "very low" impact in MNCs further indicate their stronger influence in providing stable employment in Rivers State.

Objective Two: Differences in Employment Conditions

Table 1.6: Salary Range in the Organization

Responses	DMF (%)	MNC (%)
Below N100,000	50.0	20.0
N100,000 – N300,000	40.0	40.0
Above N300,000	10.0	40.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

The salary distribution highlights a significant difference in compensation between the two types of firms. While 50% of DMF employees earn below N100,000, only 20% of MNC employees fall within this range. Conversely, 40% of MNC employees earn above N300,000, compared to just 10% in DMFs. This suggests that MNCs offer better remuneration packages.

Table 1.7: Available Employment Benefits

Responses	DMF (%)	MNC (%)
Health Insurance	20.0	60.0
Pension Scheme	25.0	55.0
Housing Allowance	15.0	50.0
Training & Development	40.0	65.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

Employment benefits are more prevalent in MNCs than in DMFs. For instance, 60% of MNC employees receive health insurance compared to 20% in DMFs. Similarly, training and development opportunities are significantly higher in MNCs (65%) than in DMFs (40%). This indicates that MNCs provide better welfare and career advancement opportunities.

Table 1.8: Job Security Stability

Responses	DMF (%)	MNC (%)
Very Stable	15.0	40.0
Stable	30.0	35.0
Unstable	40.0	20.0
Very Unstable	15.0	5.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

MNCs provide more stable employment, with 40% of respondents rating job security as "very stable," compared to only 15% in DMFs. Meanwhile, 40% of DMF employees feel their jobs are "unstable," whereas only 20% of MNC employees share this sentiment. This suggests that MNCs offer more secure employment conditions.

Table 1.9: Frequency of Promotions

Responses	DMF (%)	MNC (%)
Every 1-3 Years	25.0	50.0
Every 4-6 Years	35.0	30.0
Rarely	30.0	15.0
Not at All	10.0	5.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

Promotional opportunities are more frequent in MNCs, with 50% of employees receiving promotions every 1-3 years, compared to just 25% in DMFs. Meanwhile, 10% of DMF employees report never being promoted, compared to only 5% in MNCs. This indicates that career growth is more structured in MNCs.

Table 1.10: Common Mode of Employment

Responses	DMF (%)	MNC (%)
Full-time	50.0	60.0
Part-time	20.0	15.0
Temporary/Contract	20.0	20.0
Internship	10.0	5.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

Full-time employment is more dominant in MNCs (60%) than in DMFs (50%). DMFs, however, have a slightly higher proportion of part-time and temporary employment. This suggests that MNCs provide more long-term job stability.

Table 1.11: Working Conditions in the Organization

Responses	DMF (%)	MNC (%)
Excellent	10.0	30.0
Good	25.0	40.0
Average	35.0	20.0
Poor	20.0	7.0
Very Poor	10.0	3.0

Source: Field Survey, 2025; Computed with SPSS 25

MNCs are perceived to provide better working conditions, with 30% rating them as "excellent" compared to only 10% in DMFs. Poor and very poor working conditions are more common in DMFs (30%) compared to MNCs (10%). This suggests that MNCs invest more in employee welfare and workplace environment.

Test of hypotheses

$H0_1$: There is no significant difference in employment generation between multinational corporations and domestic firms in Rivers State's oil and gas sector.

Since the **p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H01)**. This means that there is a **statistically significant difference** in employment generation between MNCs and DMFs. The positive mean difference (1.893) suggests that MNCs contribute more significantly to employment creation than domestic firms. The confidence interval (1.72 – 2.07) further supports this finding, indicating a consistent difference in employment generation between the two types of firms.

$H0_2$: There is no significant difference in employment conditions between multinational corporations and domestic firms in Rivers State's oil and gas sector.

Since the **p-value (0.000) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis (H02)**. This means that there is a **statistically significant difference** in employment conditions between MNCs and DMFs. The mean difference of 2.320 indicates that employment conditions in MNCs are generally **better than in DMFs.** The confidence interval (2.17 – 2.47) further confirms that the difference in employment conditions is not due to chance.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study corroborate previous research emphasising the dominant role of multinational corporations (MNCs) in employment generation within developing economies. Consistent with Akinyemi and Osinbajo (2020), this study confirms that MNCs in Rivers State provide greater employment capacity, more structured recruitment processes, and improved job opportunities relative to domestic firms. However, this research advances the conversation by offering more recent and region-specific evidence, highlighting not only the volume but also the quality of employment differences between the two firm types.

In line with Okonkwo (2018), this study reinforces that domestic firms often operate under resource constraints that limit salary levels, job security, and employee benefits. What sets this

study apart is the nuanced quantification of these disparities through robust statistical analysis, confirming significant gaps in both employment generation and working conditions.

Furthermore, while Bello and Adeyemi (2019) identified wage disparities favouring MNCs, this research extends their findings by exploring additional dimensions such as career development opportunities and job stability, revealing a broader spectrum of competitive advantages held by MNCs. Unlike prior studies that predominantly focus on quantitative wage differences, this study integrates qualitative aspects of employment quality.

Overall, these findings underscore the urgent need for targeted policy interventions to support domestic firms, marking a shift from merely describing disparities to advocating for practical solutions to bridge the employment and welfare gap in Rivers State's oil and gas sector.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has demonstrated that multinational corporations (MNCs) continue to dominate employment generation within Rivers State's oil and gas sector, offering not only greater workforce numbers but also superior salaries, job security, and working conditions compared to domestic firms. Nevertheless, domestic firms maintain a notable role, especially in providing more flexible employment arrangements. The statistical analysis confirmed that these differences in employment volume and quality between MNCs and domestic firms are significant.

In contributing to the existing literature, this research goes beyond merely documenting disparities by providing updated empirical evidence specific to Rivers State, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of employment conditions. Furthermore, it highlights the pressing need for targeted policy interventions aimed at strengthening domestic firm an area underexplored in previous studies that often focus predominantly on MNCs. This nuanced focus broadens the understanding of labour market dynamics in the Nigerian oil and gas sector, emphasising not just economic contributions but also the quality and sustainability of employment.

To address the identified gaps, the study recommends that:

i. Government and private sector stakeholders introduce policies and financial incentives that enhance domestic firms' capacity to create jobs. This includes improved access to funding, technology, and training programmes to boost competitiveness against multinational corporations.
ii. Regulatory agencies should enforce labour laws to guarantee fair wages, job security, and employee benefits within domestic firms. Additionally, initiatives supporting skills development, career advancement, and workplace improvements are essential to elevate employment standards across the sector.

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