

The Effect of Security Threats on Human Development

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ABSTRACT

Do security threats increase or decrease a country's pace of improving human development? If security threats increase the military budget, lead to capital outflow, and destroy infrastructures, the decrease of human development's growth should be more likely. If, however, security threats increase state centralization and national cohesion, the country will likely experience more growth in human development. Focusing on competing views of why security threats might increase or decrease the growth of human development, this article offers an empirical examination of the effect that security threats have on human development. Utilizing panel data for the period of 1990 to 2010, the findings suggest that states' security threats, in general, have a harmful effect on the growth of human development. The results also show that domestic security threats have a greater negative influence on human development than external security threats. Finally, we find that the effect of security threats on human development is dependent on the level of development of countries. As the level of development increases, the negative effect of security threats on human development diminishes and becomes negligible.

1. Introduction

The primary goal of states is survival (Mearsheimer, 1990; Waltz, 1979). Any other function of states relies on the success of their efforts to secure the country. Political leaders always find themselves exposed to a variety of domestic and external threats, so they always have some security concerns.

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Given that security is the main concern of states, and security concerns occupy the minds of political leaders so seriously, how do these concerns affect other responsibilities of states? One can see that states usually progress even under high levels of security threats. The literature on the security-development nexus provides different, and often conflicting, explanations. On the one hand, many scholars suggest that war and threat of war had a major impact on state formation (Desch, 1996; Herbst, 1990) and are crucial factors in the economic development of Europe (Cramer, 2006; Tilly, 1990) and East and Southeast Asia (Stubbs, 1999). On the other hand, others demonstrate that armed conflict has a negative impact on economic growth (Abadie and Gardeazabal, 2003; Afonso-Rodriguez, 2017; Bayar and Gavriletea, 2018; Blomberg et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2008; Costalli et al., 2017; Hoeffler and Reynal-Querol, 2003; Horiuchi and Mayerson, 2015; Mourad and Avery, 2019; Polachek and Sevastianova, 2012; Stiglitz and Bilmes, 2008), state's educational system (Chamarbagwala and Morán, 2011; Diwakar, 2015; Kibris, 2014; Lai and thyne, 2007; Poirier, 2012; Shemyakina, 2011) and the health of the population (Ghobarah et al., 2003; Johnson, 2017; Levy and Sidel, 2016; Murray et al., 2002; Rieder and Choonara, 2012; Poole, 2012; Ugalde et al., 2000; Urdal and Che, 2013; Westphal and Convoy, 2015). The existing literature does not distinguish between different kinds of security threats. Furthermore, these studies have ignored the role of development level in the relationship between insecurity and economic development. We argue that the effect of security threats on human development depends on a country's level of development.

In this study, we contribute to the literature by testing the impact of security threats on human development. We then differentiate between domestic and external security threats to analyze which type of security threat has a larger effect on development. Finally, we perform further analysis to find out whether the effect of security threats on human development varies across different levels of development. Our findings suggest that security threats, in general, have a negative effect on the growth of human development. We fail to detect a statistically meaningful

relationship between external security threats and human development, while domestic security threats have a significant negative effect on human development. We also find that developing countries are more likely to experience the negative effect of security threats on human development than developed countries.

The rest of the article proceeds as follows: We first develop a theoretical framework delineating the effect of security threats on human development and derive the general hypothesis. Thereafter, we present the research design and describe how we measure security threats. Following that, we present the results of our panel data analysis. We then provide a case study of Poland and Ukraine between (1990-2018) before concluding with some implications of these findings.

2. The salience of security threats

The most important role of states is protecting their country and citizens from national security threats. No state can achieve its other goals without security. In fact, although security is not states' sole objective, to achieve those goals they must first survive. As Kenneth Waltz (1979: 91,92) points out "survival is a prerequisite to achieving any goals that states may have, other than the goal of promoting their own disappearance as political entities". To this end, states have to devote a large part of their resources to national security, as their survival is always under threat. This is due to the anarchic nature of the international system. Under anarchy, states cannot be certain about each other's intentions. There is no universal government to protect a state from the invasion of other states (Mearsheimer, 2001) "Security dilemma", one of the most well-known concepts in international relations, clearly explains states' security concerns. John Herz, who originally coined the term security dilemma argues that one state's efforts to improve its security equate to reducing the security of other states:

"Striving to attain security from attack, they are driven to acquire more and more power in order to escape the power of others. This, in turn, renders

the others more insecure and compels them to prepare for the worst. Since none can ever feel entirely secure in such a world of competing units, power competition ensues, and the vicious circle of security and power accumulation is on” (Herz, 1950: 157). However, the level of security threats varies among states. Various factors can reduce (not eliminate) the level of security threats. For example, a security alliance can alleviate national security threats, because other states know that in the event of an attack on a member state of the alliance, they will face retaliation from its allies. Also states possession of nuclear weapons can play an important role in alleviating security threats because the Invasion of a country with a nuclear deterrent increases the cost of war (Waltz, 1981). In addition, security threats in different regions can have different levels. For example, Middle Eastern states’ security threats seem to be much greater compared to Western European states’ security threats.

Security threats are not just from foreign enemies; some of them have domestic roots. Although states are the only institution that has the legitimate monopoly of force, numerous events such as competitions between parties, ethnic conflicts, and military coups can always be a threat to states. Even in the most democratic and developed countries in the world, there is always a slight chance that some group may try to overthrow the state.

3. Theory and hypotheses

Security is not the only objective and duty of states. States have many other objectives. States try to improve their economy in order to improve the welfare of their citizens. They may also have goals such as independence, diffusion of a particular ideology, environmental protection, equality, etc. Despite living in such an environment of insecurity, states often succeed in developing their country. We often observe that states are thriving, even though they are involved in a war, which is the highest level of security threat.

For example, the United States' human development score was 0.881 in 2000. The United States went to war with Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003. In 2010 while the war with both countries was underway, The United States' human development score reached 0.911. How can political leaders develop their country under such intense security threats? Do security threats have a positive impact on development? Or are there other factors that derive development, and can security threats negatively affect development and slow its growth? Given the cost of security threats, it is likely that security threats slow the growth of human development. In the case of the United States, for instance, probably if the leaders of the United States were not involved in the war with Afghanistan and Iraq, they would have had more success in economic development. But any imaginable difference in that counterfactual world would be minuscule because the wars in which the US was involved hardly affected domestic policy: although the national debt was rising rapidly, there was no shortage of funds for domestic undertakings and, in other ways too, their domestic policy was essentially protected from the state's foreign adventures.

Security threats can slow the growth of human development in three ways: First, the state that faces security threats needs to build a strong army in order to defend the country against foreign enemies. Hence, the state must allocate more resources to military affairs. Consequently, governmental resources which can be invested in economically productive sectors are spent on military affairs. Even the ability of leaders to bring about change is limited and when their limited political capital is spent on security-related crises, there remains little political capital that a leader can use to bring about much-needed reform, and hence the country falls behind in terms of development. (Collier, 2006; Deger and Sen, 1983; knight et al., 1996). Second, security threats can lead to capital outflow. Investing in a country that has high security threats is risky for capital owners. Therefore, it is no surprise that capital owners transfer their wealth out of the country. Third, security threats at a high level –interstate and civil wars- may destroy

infrastructures such as health and educational facilities. Following the above discussion, we put forward our first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. *A state's level of security threats tends to decrease its pace of improving human development.*

What kind of security threat might have a greater negative impact on human development? Do domestic security threats and external security threats have different effects on human development? Because domestic security threats certainly occur inside the country, they probably have many devastating consequences on human development, while it is possible that war and other types of interstate conflicts don't damage the infrastructure and internal resources of countries. On the contrary, the weapons of the states are much more advanced than the weapons of the insurgent and terrorist groups. Therefore, external security threats can be more destructive than domestic security threats. This leads us to the two competing hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: *domestic security threats have a greater negative effect on human development than external security threats.*

Hypothesis 1b: *external security threats have a greater negative effect on human development than domestic security threats.*

This may not be the case if security threats foster a state's centralization and strengthen political institutions. For example, the war-making and state-making literature emphasize the role of wars and international conflicts in state centralization and development (Hintze, 1975; Tilly, 1985). Political leaders who face external threats have more incentives to mobilize resources to create institutional centralization and build large standing armies (Gibler, 2010). Furthermore, external threats can generate rally-round-the-flag and increase national cohesion (Levy, 1989). When a country faces a challenging security environment, domestic oppositions and ethnic groups put aside their quarrels in order to deal with the more immediate danger (Desch, 1996). Consistent with these arguments, some studies illustrate the positive effect of international conflicts on economic growth (Cramer, 2006; Stubbs, 1999). Knutsen (2011), however, distinguishes between different types of threats

that dictatorial regimes face, and illustrates that while external threats induce dictators to pursue economic development policies, domestic threats enforce them to conduct policies that are harmful to economic development. This leads us to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. *A state's level of security threats tends to increase its pace of improving human development.*

4. Research Design

Table 1 reports descriptive statistics on the main variables used. Eight independent variables are used to determine each state's security threats. To empirically analyze the effect of security threats on human development, we utilize panel data for the 1990-2010 period. The time period 1990-2010, inclusive, is determined by the availability of the human development data (available from 1990) and militarized interstate dispute data (available until 2010).

Table 1. Summary statistics

	Observations	Mean	Std. dev.	Min.	Max.
Human development index	3409	63.473	16.791	18.9	94.2
Security threats	3990	2.404	5.444	0	106
Domestic security threats	3990	0.804	3.654	0	101
External security threats	3990	1.6	3.477	0	34
No militarized action	3988	0.106	0.383	0	4
Threat to use force	3990	0.019	0.206	0	4
Display of force	3990	0.367	1.293	0	18
Use of force	3990	0.903	2.311	0	24
War	3990	0.203	1.41	0	10
Civil war	3990	0.526	2.31	0	20
Coup	3990	0.094	0.693	0	16
Terrorist bombing	3990	0.183	2.6	0	101
Development	3408	2.337	1.2	0	4
Natural log of population	3987	15.398	2.155	9.095	21.014
Natural log of GDP per capita	3783	7.86	1.586	4.555	11.872
Democracy	3319	2.818	6.712	-10	10
Military capabilities	3866	0.005	0.017	0.00	0.208

4.1 Dependent variable

Our dependent variable is the ‘change of Human Development Index (HDI)’. To calculate this variable, we measure the year-to-year changes in a country’s human development. The Human Development Index is one of the most useful indicators of development which emphasizes that progress in human and social development should be the main criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone. The Human Development Index considers three indicators: a long and healthy life, access to education, and a decent standard of living. Each country’s HDI score ranges from 0 to 1, where 1 represents the highest level of development. However, since the coefficients will be very small, we multiply each country’s HDI by 100. All Human Development data are from United Nations Development Program (2019).

4.2 Independent variables

Our main independent variable is security threats. We create an index of security threats by combining eight independent variables. We set a specific coefficient for each of the independent variables according to their importance. The first independent variable is civil war which is the highest level of security threats and that coded as 10 if a country is under a civil war in a given year and 0 otherwise. The data for civil war are gathered from the Intra-State War (version 5.1 is used) of the Correlates of War Project (COW).

Our second independent variable is Coup. The importance of this variable is that coups are usually designed to kill or arrest political leaders and overthrow their administration. This variable takes the value of 4 if a state is under coup and 0 otherwise. The data for the coup are from Coup d'état Events (Marshall and Marshal, 2019) of Center for Systemic Peace (CSP).

The third independent variable that we consider for security threats is terrorist bombing. We expect terrorist bombings to create less security threats than interstate war and civil war. Although people die because of

terrorist bombings, political leaders have no concern about losing their power or territory. As Waltz (2002) points, even though terrorists bring trouble, they are not a serious threat to national security. The data for terrorist bombings are taken from the Center for Systemic Peace (CSP) which includes all terrorist attacks by non-state actors resulting in 15 or more death and indicates whether or not a country is facing terrorist bombing (1) or no terrorist bombing (0) in a given year.

The fourth independent variable is interstate war. War with another country creates huge security concerns for political leaders. Interstate war means a great slaughter on the battlefield and a massacre of civilians. Interstate war can completely destroy a state. We code as 10 for countries involving the interstate war in a given year and 0 otherwise. The data for interstate war is taken from Militarized Interstate Dispute (Palmer et al., 2019) of the Correlates of War Project (COW).

The other four independent variables are interstate disputes which are considered a kind of war in a lower level and like interstate war is “Militarized Interstate Dispute” are provided in Correlates of War Project. Although this level of dispute does not include the full encounter of countries, still can be an important threat to national security. These variables and their codes for countries involved in interstate dispute are as follows: no militarized action = 1, threat to use force = 2, display of force = 3, use of force = 4.

We also use human development classification as an interaction variable to analyze the development condition. These data are taken from United Nations Development Program (2019). We code HDI categories as: very low human development = 0, low human development = 1, medium human development = 2, high human development = 3, very high human development = 4.

4.3 Control variables

Three additional variables are included in the models to control for the other independent factors on development. A democracy variable is used to control for the influence of regime type on development. It is expected that countries with democratic institutes get a higher level of development (Quinn and Woolley, 2001; Rodrik and Wacziarg, 2005; Shen, 2002). Our democracy indicator is the Polity IV data set (Marshall et al., 2018); each country's democracy score ranges from -10 (most autocratic) to +10 (most democratic). The second control variable is population. Population growth increases human capital and will thus has a positive effect on economic development (Darrat and Al-Yousif, 1999). The data for the population is from the World Bank. Finally, for controlling the possible effect of military capabilities on development, we include this variable in the model. The data for military capabilities is taken from the National Material Capabilities (NMC) of the Correlates of War Project (COW).

5. Results and Discussion

We first test the unconditional average effect of security threats on development. Table II reports the results from the data analysis. The first model reports the findings from security threats as the main independent variable. In the second model, we differentiate between domestic security threats and external security threats. We measure domestic security threats as a combination of civil war, coup, and terrorist bombing, and the external security threats variable is a combination of no militarized action, threat to use force, display of force, use of force, and interstate war. The results for the security threats (all) variable suggest that security threats, in general, lead to lower human development in all countries. Therefore, the findings from the security threats variable support the hypothesis that security threats of state are likely to decrease the pace of improving human development.

Which type of security threat has a larger effect on development? We observe that domestic security threats have significant negative effects on

human development, while there is no meaningful relationship between external security threats and human development. Therefore, states with domestic security threats are more likely to experience lower growth in development.

Table 2. Security threats and human development

	Model 1	Model 2
Security threats (all)	-0.011*** (0.0032)	
Domestic security threats		-0.023*** (0.0047)
External security threats		-0.0008 (0.0045)
Democracy	0.025*** (0.005)	0.024*** (0.005)
Population	0.149 (0.098)	0.154 (0.098)
Military capabilities	0.858 (4.574)	0.029 (4.573)
Constant	-1.929 (1.581)	-2.03 (1.579)
Observations	2885	2885

Standard errors in parentheses, * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

The findings so far indicate a negative correlation between security threats and human development. We argue that the effect of state's security threats on human development may depend on a country's level of development. Using Models 1 and 2, however, we cannot see the interaction between security threats and levels of development. The interaction models determine whether security threats are dependent on the level of development to affect the change of human development.

Table 3. Conditional effects of security threats

	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Security threats (All) * Development	0.0053** (0.0023)		
Security threats (All)	-0.022*** (0.0056)		
Level of Development	-0.136*** (0.049)	-0.133*** (0.049)	-0.131*** (0.049)
Population	0.112 (0.099)	0.118 (0.099)	0.119 (0.099)
Democracy	0.023*** (0.005)	0.023*** (0.005)	0.023*** (0.005)
Military capabilities	0.358 (4.58)	0.19 (4.57)	0.219 (4.577)
Domestic Security threats * Development		0.004 (0.004)	
Domestic Security threats		-0.029*** (0.007)	-0.023*** (0.004)
External Security threats		-0.0008 (0.004)	-0.006 (0.009)
External Security threats * Development			0.002 (0.003)
Constant	-1.02 (1.612)	-1.13 (1.611)	-1.151 (1.611)
Observation	2885	2885	2885

Standard errors in parentheses, * $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Model 3 shows the interaction of security threats (all) and development. The results suggest that the level of development of countries has a statistically significant conditioning effect on the relationship between security threats and human development. The positive sign of this coefficient implies that security threats have a greater effect when countries are at the basic level of development.

Model 4 and model 5 estimate whether the effects of domestic and external security threats are conditioned by the level of development. In model 4 the interaction term for domestic security threats produces a positive and but not significant, similarly, in model 5, the interaction term for external security threats fails to reach the traditional threshold of statistical significance.

To precisely interpret the interaction effects, we must graphically demonstrate the marginal effect of security threats at different levels of development (Brambor et al., 2006). Figure 2 shows how the marginal effect of security threats changes with different levels of development. The graph illustrates that the negative effect of security threats (all) decreases as the level of development increases. It can be seen that the statistically significant, negative effect of security threats on human development only exists as the level of development is lower than 2.7, which means security threats don't have a significant effect on human development in developed countries. Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the marginal effect of domestic security threats and external security threats. Figure 3 demonstrates that domestic security threats have a strong reductive effect on human development when the level of development is higher than 3.1. Once the level of development is upper than 3.1, domestic security threats no longer have a significant reductive effect on human development. However, figure 4 indicates the insignificant effect of external security threats and the lack of interaction with the level of development.

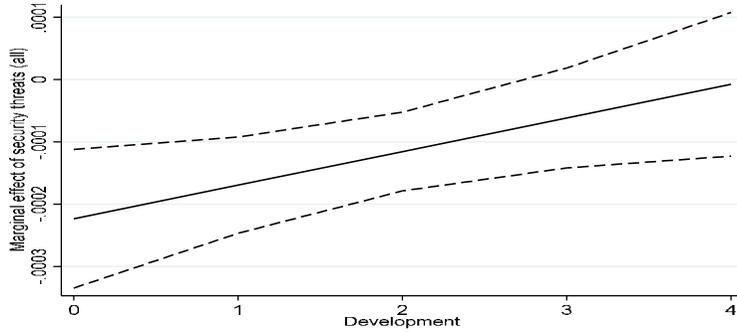


Figure 1. Marginal effect of security threats on human development

Note: 95% confidence intervals are denoted with dashed lines

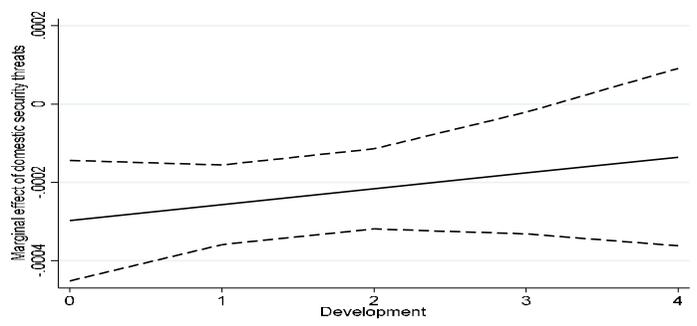


Figure 2. Marginal effect of domestic security threats on human development

Note: 95% confidence intervals are denoted with dashed lines

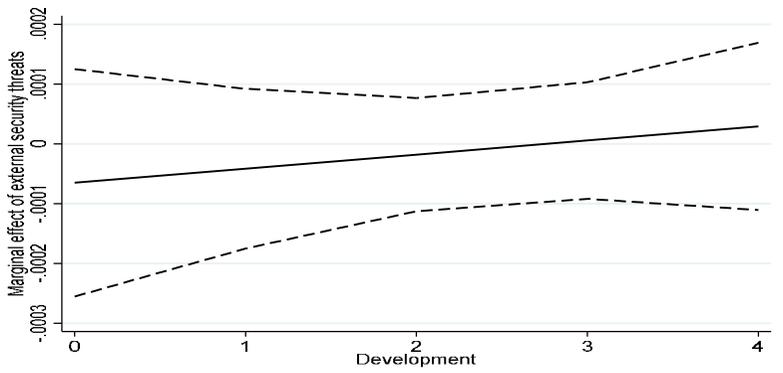


Figure 3. Marginal effect of external security threats on human development

Note: 95% confidence intervals are denoted with dashed lines

6. The example of Poland and Ukraine

To better illustrate our theoretical claims about the effect of security threats on human development, we test our argument with paired-comparison case studies of Poland and Ukraine since the end of the Cold War. These two countries are good cases for our study. Poland and Ukraine are in the same region, Both Poland and Ukraine were communist countries during the Cold War, and both were part of the eastern block at this time. After the end of the Cold War, both Poland and Ukraine pursued a policy of economic liberalization. Despite the many political, geographical, and historical similarities between Poland and Ukraine, they differ significantly in one dimension: security threats. Since gaining independence from the Soviet Union on August 24, 1991, Ukrainian leaders faced many security challenges mostly coming from Russia. Ukraine has been at loggerheads with Russia over many issues such as the status of Crimea, the division of the Black Sea Fleet, and NATO membership (for details, see Karatnycky and motyal, 2009; Sherr, 1997). However, the major part of the security threats of Ukrainian leaders were domestic security threats. Ukrainian leaders faced many problems due to the large Russian minority, who live mainly in the eastern part of the country. Poisoning of Viktor Yushchenko, the 2004

Orange Revolution and the response of the Russian minority to it, and the 2014 separatist war in Donbas, are just some of the domestic security threats of Ukrainian leaders (For more information on Ukraine's domestic unrest, see Bebler, 2015; karatnycky, 2005; Katchanovski, 2016).

Poland, like Ukraine, had conflicts with Russia over many issues. The most important of these conflicts are Poland's membership in NATO and the deployment of NATO missile defense systems in Poland. However, those tensions were not great enough to be a threat to Poland's survival. In addition, during this period, Poland contributed to many UN and NATO operations. However, participating in these operations couldn't concern Polish leaders very much because they had powerful allies in those operations. (For more information about Poland's external security threats, see Paszewski, 2016; Zaborowski, 2004; Zaborowski and Longhurst, 2003; Longhurst, 2013). It is important to note that between 1990-2010 Poland, unlike Ukraine, hadn't major domestic security threats.

Figure 4 illustrates the trend of Ukraine and Poland's human development between 1990 and 2018. During this period Ukraine's HDI value increased from 0.705 to 0.75, an increase of 6.38 percent. In the same period, Poland's HDI value increased from 0.712 to 0.872, an increase of 22.47 percent. Between 1990 and 2018, both countries had positive growth in human development, but Poland experienced faster growth in human development. This is likely due to Ukraine's greater security threats than Poland.

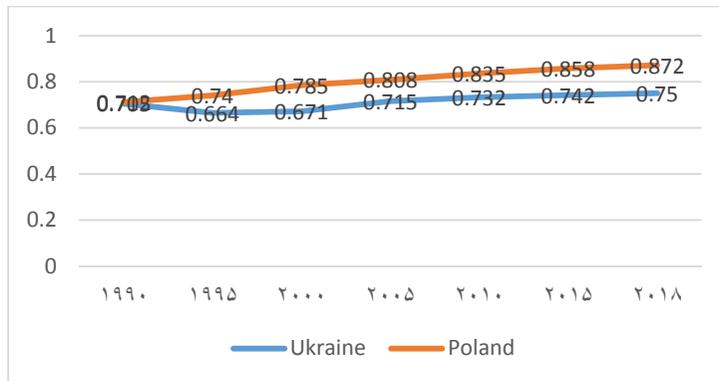


Figure 4. HDI trends for Ukraine and Poland, 1980-2018. Data source: World Bank

7. Conclusion

The literature on the security-development nexus provides conflicting findings regarding the relationship between security threats and economic development. This article combines various types of insecurity to create an index of security threats and then study its effect on human development. The results from our empirical models show that a higher level of security threats against a state is associated with slower growth of human development. In terms of the origins of security threats, our findings demonstrate that domestic security threats have a negative and statistically significant effect on human development, while the effect of external security threats on human development, while negative, does not appear to be statistically significant. Consequently, one can imagine that domestic security threats of states are more harmful to the growth of human development through increasing military spending, capital outflow, and undermining infrastructure. Furthermore, our findings demonstrate that the effect of security threats on human development is dependent on the level of development of countries. As the level of development increases, the negative effect of security threats on human development decreases. What we observe is that even domestic security threats do not show a negative effect on human development in the most developed countries.

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