

An Empirical Analysis of Role of Media in Policy Agenda Setting: A Case of Pakistan (2018-2019)

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Abstract

Exploring the relationship between mass media and agenda setting is very interesting and valuable to determine the future horizons of public policy. But there are not so many quantitative studies available in this field. In this study, we have used both statistical and mathematical quantitative techniques to analyze this association. Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan and Rawalpindi: four mega cities of Punjab province have been used as a case study in this research process. Through proportional allocation method, the sample size was found to be 485. Our research objectives were to find the impact of important media variables on policy and to quantify the overall impact for all the four cities. In current study, analysis logistic regression showed significance to the importance media variables on public policy and Atkinson formula to quantify the overall impact. The data was collected through a field survey from sampled population. The impact of newspaper, television, radio and internet was found to be highly significant on policy agenda while the impact of magazines, books and brochures and mobile phones was insignificant. The result from indexing approach showed that about 54 percent of the opinion verifies the positive relationship between mass media and public policy agenda setting in case of Lahore. This opinion was found 68, 79 and 50 percent in case of Faisalabad, Multan and Rawalpindi respectively. For all cities, it is apparent that media affects the formulation of public policy, but magnitude is relatively higher in case of Multan and

Faisalabad than Lahore and Rawalpindi. This shows that people in advanced communities give less importance to the news and talk shows of media.

Keywords: Media, Public policy agenda setting, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Rawalpindi, Logistic regression.

Introduction

Mass media economics has been becoming a very popular branch of knowledge in current era. It is leading to new series of theories and aid in probing the area which was not noticed by economists for a long period of time. The literature on media economics is becoming important day by day (McCluskey and Swinnen, 2008). The political market are controlled by mass media, one of the important economic problems which need to be explored by the economists. The impact of media in framing the public policy depends on the news source: it is depend on the reliable and well-reputed news agencies have higher impact than unreliable sources (Bartels 1996).

The credit of agenda-setting theory goes to science of communication, which is categorized in five stages for example, media agenda source, basic agenda setting effects, attribute agenda setting, Consequences of agenda-setting effects, and psychology of agenda-setting effects (McCombs, 2005). All of these stages are concerned with how the basic agenda would be set, what are the characteristics of a good agenda setting? How the agenda will be made popular? What psychological elements must be kept in mind to capture the attention of the masses? And what are the possible effects and consequences of agenda setting?

The agenda-setting policy literature has been important since ages ago. The category which define how media directly impact on electoral results is called as political behavior. Berelson et. al. (1954) found from their study on voting that media hype has impact on policies made by the political parties in elections. In the study of McCombs and Shaw (1972) concluded that the public-agenda literature defines the role of media in catching attention on different issues. They concluded that media is a powerful tool to set the agenda by covering issues on news. Cobb and Elder (1972) investigated and found that there are general

set of issues for every time and media must highlight these issues.

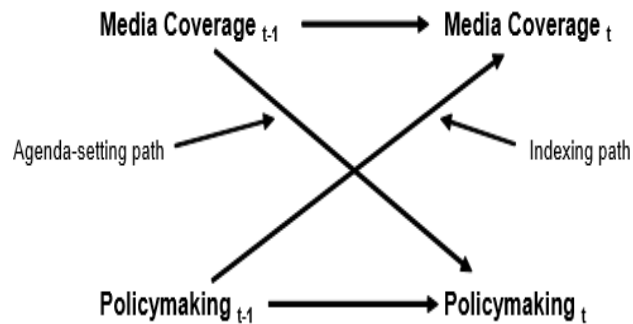
Media plays an integral part in creating hype on issues of public (Iyengar and Kinder 1987). Media may guide in determining voters' preferences setting and choices (Becker 1977). The masses can be informed by media about the fact-based information and other public issues. The issues comparison is the most important thing which media address to the public to understand the issue (McCombs and Shaw, 1977).

There are two contradictory views about the role of media. First, greater the political awareness a person has, the more likely he will receive the message (Zaller & John, 1992). On the other hand, Weaver and David (1977) found that as the level of political awareness increases, the level to rely on the media news decreases. A survey concluded that almost 57% of American nationals do not trust in their news channels for accuracy and honesty (Morales, 2010). This shows that with the increase of awareness the trust decrease among the people.

There are four different theories regarding media role in showing the policy agenda of public. Influence theory: the politicians get help by media that what they should think, Agenda Setting Theory: the media guide the politicians on which direction they should think, Indexing Theory: The politicians in reaction, ask the media to what to write. In fact this theory shows the influence of politician on media that might happen through personal gains or material temptation and other one, Detection Theory: in this scenario both the politicians and media work together to find out the way towards complex scheme of information (Bryan & Michelle, 2007).

The path of media effects on public policy and public policy effects on media is shown in the following diagram.

Figure 1: A Path Model of Media Effects



Source: adapted from Bryan and Michelle

The figure shows Agenda setting path versus Indexing path. Agenda setting path in one period affects the Policy setting path in the other period and vice versa. On the basis of literature, we formulate the following research questions for the current study;

Is the agenda of public set by mass media?

Can the impact of media on policy agenda be measured empirically?

These are the questions of our debate and we have tried our best to answer these questions. For the purpose to answer these questions, we collected data through a field survey from four mega cities (Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan and Rawalpindi) of Punjab, Pakistan. Our aim was to select such a response group who could easily understand what we wanted to know from them. For this purpose people having minimum ten years of education were selected from almost all segments of life keeping in view that they could better understand the role of media than those who are less educated or uneducated.

On the basis of these research questions, following objectives will be addressed in the current study.

- I. To investigate the impact of media on policy agenda setting (Statistical approach).
- II. To quantify the overall impact of media on public policy (Mathematical approach)

Both quantitative approaches (statistical and mathematical) have been used in this study to fulfill the gap that there are not so many quantitative studies available in this field. Regression analysis has been used to see the impact of different segments of media on public policy and indexing approach to quantify the overall impact.

Literature Review

The public policy and media relationship is very important and one of the key problems that must be explored. A lot of literature is available on mass media and its impact on policy agenda but very few studies are available which could measure this impact in quantitative terms. Some important studies have been reviewed in this section which was helpful to find the research gap for the study in hand.

Media access to the public always give more power them in sense of politics, as a result they can gain more benefits from the government policies (Stromberg and Snyder, 2008). Due to media influence, unemployment relief is given United States (Stromberg, 2004b). Furthermore, the provision of food and relief against the calamities is given in India (Besley and Burgess, 2001, 2002), and expenses of education in Uganda and Madagascar (Reinikka and Svensson, 2005; Francken et al., 2009).

Many studies conformed a positive relation between the role of media and agenda of public (see McCombs, 2004 , for an extensive review). A great importance to find the facts about this relationship was given by Hill et.al (2012) through the actual choice framework. The given framework has tendency to opt variables in policy problem and in policy making process. Political debates on media are also important. Political debates should be arranged by different media groups in which policy makers should participate and these debate must conclude the

policy agenda setting which could be favorable for welfare of public (Volden et.al,2008; Babu 2014).

Almánzar et.al (2013) explored that mass media have an impact on the price fluctuations of commodities. They empirically found that the media coverage of commodity prices is positively correlated with price movements, with volatility higher on days when there is higher media coverage. They also found the effects are caused by the market mechanisms of supply and demand. Swinnen et.al (2005) also established similar results.

Olper and Swinnen (2013) conducted an empirical study on the possible effect of different aspects of media on agricultural policies. They found that if there is media penetration and the voters are informed about the policies, the majority will be benefitted. They also found that in poorer countries, greater media penetration led to a reduction in agricultural taxation. Voters rely on media products such as newspapers to decide on private action. Besley and Burgess (2000) found that Indian state governments' responsiveness in the context of a fall in food production was proved to be positively correlated with the local newspapers' circulation.

Almost whole of the literature reviewed shows that there is strong correlation between media and policy agenda setting. It has been found that most of the studies are theoretical in nature. There is need of studies which could narrate this relationship in quantitative terms. We tried our best to show this relationship in quantitative terms in the study in hand. Both statistical regression models and mathematical indexing approaches have been used to show this relationship in empirical form

Methodology

Target Population

The study is based on primary data which was collected through a field survey. Four mega cities of Punjab, a province of Pakistan have been used as a case study. Thus target population consists of Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan and Rawalpindi. These cities cover almost all the regional parts of Punjab (southern, central

and northern). Following table shows the total population of these cities.

Table 2.1: Total Population under study

Sr. no	Name of cities	Population
1	Lahore	11,126,285
2	Faisalabad	7,874,790
3	Multan	4,745,109
4	Rawalpindi	5,405,633
	Total	29,151,817

Source: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2018

Sampling

Proportional allocation method has been used. Total sample size has been calculated by following formula. The sample size (SS) will be equal to

$$\frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left(\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N} \right)}$$

Ahmed, et. al. (2015)

Where N = population size, e = Margin of error (percentage in decimal form, z = z-score

p = Confidence interval, SS= Sample Size

As we know that

N = 29,151,817, e = 5 %, z = 1.96, p = 95 %

n = 485

Proportional allocation method was used to obtain Sample from each city:

$$n_i = \frac{N_h}{N} \times SS$$

Where

N_h = Population of the specific city, N = Total population
and

SS = Sample Size

The city wise sampling distribution is given as follows

Table 2.2: Profile of Sampling Distribution

Sr. no	Name of cities	Population
1	Lahore	185
2	Faisalabad	131
3	Multan	79
4	Rawalpindi	90
	Total	485

Source: Researcher's own calculations

Data Collection

The data was collected through a field survey from sampled population (485). The target population includes literate (minimum bachelor) politicians, farmers, businessmen, engineers, doctors, civil officers, professors, media men and scholars in different universities keeping in view that educated people may better analyze the role of media in policy agenda.

Regression model

Following regression model has been used to analyze the impact of media on policy agenda

$$PP = \beta + \beta_1 NP + \beta_2 MG + \beta_3 BB + \beta_4 TL + \beta_5 RD + \beta_6 MF + \beta_7 IT + \xi$$

Where β is the intercept term while $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5, \beta_6, \beta_7$ are coefficients of independent variables and ξ is error term.

PP = Public Policy (1= If respondent thinks that media has any impact on policy agenda, 0 = Otherwise).

NP = News Paper (1= If the respondent reads newspaper frequently in political context, 0 = Otherwise).

MG = Magazine (1= If the respondent reads magazines in political context, 0 = Otherwise).

BB = Books and Brochures (1= If the respondent reads books and brochures in political context, 0 = Otherwise).

TL = Television (1= If the respondent watches television in political context, 0 = Otherwise).

RD = Radio (1= If the respondent listens radio in political context, 0 = Otherwise).

MF= Mobile Phone (1= If the respondent thinks that mobile is a source of awareness in context of understanding the policy agenda, 0 = Otherwise).

IT= Internet (1= If the respondent considers internet as a source of awareness in context of understanding the policy agenda, 0 = Otherwise).

Quantification of Impact of Media on Policy Agenda

Following Atkinson formula is used to quantify the impact of media on policy agenda.

$$X_A = (P_1X_1^\mu + P_2X_2^\mu + P_3X_3^\mu + P_4X_4^\mu + P_5X_5^\mu + P_6X_6^\mu + P_7X_7^\mu)^{1/\mu}$$

Where, X_A is overall contribution of all segments of media towards policy agenda. $X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6$ and X_7 show contribution of newspaper, magazine, books and brochures, television, radio, mobile phones and internet respectively. $P_1, P_2, P_3, P_4, P_5, P_6$ and P_7 show the weights assigned to each variable and $\mu = 7$

Results and Discussion

The study in hand consists of two parts

- I. First part deals with individual contribution of each segment of media towards policy agenda (regression analysis)

- II. Second part of the study consists of overall contribution of media towards policy agenda (use of Atkinson formula for quantification of impact of media on policy agenda).

Results of Logistic Regression

The results of logistic regression are shown in the following

Table 4.1: Results of Logistic Regression

Logistic Regression	Observation	=	485	Number of	LR	Chi²	(8)
		=	111.49			Prob	> Chi²
		=	0.0000				
Log likelihood: -				Pseudi		R²	
17.25863		=	0.7636				

Different segments of media	Coef.	Std. Err.	Z	P> z	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Newspaper	1.848256	0.0011963	3.000	0.003	0.0012493	0.005939
Magazine	0.003027	0.0032142	3.26	0.005	3.709061	14.86541
Books and Brochures	0.002030	0.0028414	2.78	0.002	4.950617	0.85573
Television	3.251452	1.2523744	2.543	0.012	3.329112	-0.35365
Radio	0.521520	0.7254125	2.82	0.001	13.2715	-2.38559

Mobile Phone	0.000321	0.00011	3.08	0.7825	2.642197	11.88918
Internet	0.932581	0.652454	2.25	0.5251	0.5722122	8.436764

Sources: Calculations from the field survey data, 2018 using STATA

With the help of this table, the odd ratio have been calculated, which have been given in Table (4.3).

Table 4.2: The Odd Ratio Analysis

Logistic Regression	Observations	Number = 485	of
	LR Chi ² (8)	=	111.49
	Prob. > Chi ²	=	0.0000
Log likelihood = -17.25863	Pseudo R ²	=	0.7636

Different segments of media	Coef.	Std. Err.	Z	P	[95% Conf. Interval]	
Newspaper	2.00361	0.0012006	3.00	0.0034	1.00125	1.005956
Magazine	1.07998	3.073554	3.26	0.5803	40.81546	2857365
Books and Brochures	0.53244	0.0572971	-2.78	0.9825	0.007079	0.424974
Television	3.25145	0.1203861	2.43	0.0002	0.035825	-0.35365
Radio	10.23164	0.0011058	2.82	0.025	1.77E-06	0.702124

Mobile Phone	0.00003	33.74194	3.08	0.4852	14.04402	11.88918
Internet	0.00001	18.14138	2.25	0.3215	1.772183	8.436764

Sources: Calculations from the field survey data, 2018 using STATA

The recent econometric analysis goes beyond the Odd ratio analysis, mainly because of the fact that Odd ratio itself is complex phenomenon. It becomes too difficult to illustrate the magnitude of various attributes. Therefore, the econometric analysis is extended in the form of Marginal Effects; so as to explain the connection of response variable and set of explanatory attributes in the linear form.

Table 4.3: Estimation Of Marginal Effects

Different segments of media	dy/dx	Std. Err.	Z	P	[95% Conf. Interval]		X
Newspaper	13.0025	0.00019	3.00	0.0034	0.00032	0.00108	18.6724
Magazine	0.0059	0.60378	3.26	0.5803	0.61825	2.98503	0.89623
Books and Brochures	0.0003	0.22996	-2.78	0.9825	1.0139	0.1125	2.22642
Television	48.45102	0.13825	2.43	0.0000	0.6282	0.0862	2.35849
Radio	4.0021	0.05717	2.82	0.025	1.0575	0.8334	0.25472
Mobile Phone	0.0001	0.15162	3.08	0.4852	0.35092	0.94527	0.22642

Internet	5.982	0.009	2.2	0.02	0.135	0.898	0.254
	5	46	5	15	94	73	72

Sources: Calculations from the field survey data, 2018 using STATA

It is apparent from table 4.3 that the impact of newspaper is significant on policy agenda. The results show that those who read the newspapers have 13.0025 percent more faith that public policy is affected by media than those who do not read newspapers. Magazines, books and brochures and mobile phones have no significant impact on the public policy because the value of P is greater than the level of significance. In case of television, radio and internet the impact is significant. The results show that those who watch television, listen radio and use internet have 48.45102, 4.0021 and 5.9825 percent respectively more belief that media affects the formation of public policy than those who do not use these media segments. This shows that there is strong correlation between media and public policy agenda. The results are in line with a lot of other studies available in the literature but most of them are qualitative in nature. For detail see Hill et.al (2012), McCluskey & Swinnen (2008), Bryan & Michelle (2007) and Almánzar et.al (2013).

Quantification of Impact of Media on Policy Agenda

The following Atkinson formula is used to quantify the impact of media on policy agenda.

$$X_A = (P_1X_1^\mu + P_2X_2^\mu + P_3X_3^\mu + P_4X_4^\mu + P_5X_5^\mu + P_6X_6^\mu + P_7X_7^\mu)^{1/\mu}$$

There are seven media variables which have been included in the study to see the impact of media on public policy. As it is apparent from regression results that magazines, books and brochures and mobile phones have no significant impacts on the public policy, so their impact will be excluded for quantification of impact of media on public policy. Thus for four variables, the formula will take the following form.

$$X_A = (P_1X_1^\mu + P_2X_2^\mu + P_3X_3^\mu + P_4X_4^\mu)^{1/\mu}$$

Where, X_A is overall contribution of all four segments of media towards policy agenda. X_1, X_2, X_3 and X_4 show contribution of newspaper, television, radio and internet respectively. P_1, P_2, P_3 and P_4 show the weights assigned to each variable and $\mu = 4$.

Quantification of Impact of Media on Policy Agenda for Lahore

$P_1 = 13.0025(0.1820)$, $P_2 = 48.45102 (0.6782)$, $P_3 = 4.0021(0.0560)$ and $P_4 = 5.9825 (0.0837)$ { Relative weights, see Table(4.3) for detail}. Similarly $X_1 = 38\%$, $X_2 = 58\%$, $X_3 = 29\%$ and $X_4 = 35\%$ (See appendix (A-1) for detail) and $\mu = 4$. Note the value in bracket show relative =weightage out of 1. It is necessary to present results in percentage form.

$$X_A = (P_1X_1^\mu + P_2X_2^\mu + P_3X_3^\mu + P_4X_4^\mu)^{1/\mu}$$

Putting the values

$$X_A = (0.1820 * 38^4 + 0.6782 * 58^4 + 0.0560 * 29^4 + 0.0837 * 35^4)^{1/4}$$

$$X_A = 54\%$$

Quantification of Impact of Media on Policy Agenda for Faisalabad

$P_1 = 13.0025(0.1820)$, $P_2 = 48.45102 (0.6782)$, $P_3 = 4.0021(0.0560)$ and $P_4 = 5.9825 (0.0837)$ { Relative weights, see Table (4.3)for detail}. Similarly $X_1 = 65\%$, $X_2 = 71\%$, $X_3 = 59\%$ and $X_4 = 53\%$ (See appendix (A-2) for detail) and $\mu = 4$.

$$X_A = (P_1X_1^\mu + P_2X_2^\mu + P_3X_3^\mu + P_4X_4^\mu)^{1/\mu}$$

Putting the values

$$X_A = 68\%$$

Quantification of Impact of Media on Policy Agenda for Multan

$P_1 = 13.0025(0.1820)$, $P_2 = 48.45102 (0.6782)$, $P_3 = 4.0021(0.0560)$ and $P_4 = 5.9825 (0.0837)$ { Relative weights, see

Table (4.3) for detail}. Similarly $X_1=77\%$, $X_2=82\%$, $X_3=65\%$ and $X_4=46\%$ (See appendix (A-3) for detail) and $\mu = 4$.

$$X_A = (P_1X_1^\mu + P_2X_2^\mu + P_3X_3^\mu + P_4X_4^\mu)^{1/\mu}$$

Putting the values

$$X_A = 79\%$$

Quantification of Impact of Media on Policy Agenda for Rawalpindi

$P_1 = 13.0025$ (0.1820), $P_2 = 48.45102$ (0.6782), $P_3 = 4.0021$ (0.0560) and $P_4 = 5.9825$ (0.0837) { Relative weights, see Table (4.3) for detail}. Similarly $X_1=42\%$, $X_2=52\%$, $X_3=40\%$ and $X_4=37\%$ (See appendix (A-4) for detail) and $\mu = 4$.

$$X_A = (P_1X_1^\mu + P_2X_2^\mu + P_3X_3^\mu + P_4X_4^\mu)^{1/\mu}$$

Putting the values

$$X_A = 50\%$$

The results show that about 54 percent of the opinion verifies that mass media has positive relationship with public policy agenda setting in case of Lahore. This opinion is 68, 79 and 50 percent in case of Faisalabad, Multan and Rawalpindi respectively. For all cities, it is apparent that media affects the formation of public policy but magnitude is relatively higher in case of Multan and Faisalabad than Lahore and Rawalpindi. Lahore is second largest city of Pakistan and provincial capital of Punjab province. Rawalpindi is twin of Islamabad which is federal capital of Pakistan. All this show that Lahore and Rawalpindi are comparatively advanced cities of Pakistan than Multan and Faisalabad. The results are in line with a lot of other studies which narrate that in advanced communities people give less importance to the news of media.

Weaver and David (1977) found that as the level of political awareness increases, the level to rely on the media news decreases. Gallup survey indicated that 57 % of Americans have little to no trust in the media's ability to report news fairly and

accurately (Morales, 2010). This shows that as the level of awareness increases, the level of faith of people on the role of media decreases.

Concluding Remarks

The objective of the study is to find the impact of media on public policy agenda setting. A large number of studies are available in literature which show that media affects the public policy positively but most of them are qualitative in nature. There is need of quantitative research in this field. We used logistic regression to analyze the impact of different media variables on public policy and indexing approach to quantify the overall impact. We collected data through a field survey from four mega cities (Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan and Rawalpindi) of Punjab, Pakistan. Our aim was to select such a response group who could easily understand what we wanted to know from them. For this purpose people having minimum ten years of education were selected from almost all segments of life keeping in view that they could better understand the role of media than those who are less educated or uneducated.

Statistical analysis shows that the impact of some media variables (television, newspaper, radio and internet) on policy agenda is significant and positive. Mathematical indexing approach shows that media affects the policy positively but magnitude of impact is higher in case of Multan and Faisalabad than Rawalpindi and Lahore which verifies the fact that people belonging to advance communities rely less on media news than others. Whatever the intensity of the magnitude for what area, the ultimate empirical finding is that media affects the policy agenda positively. Media houses might be requested to propagate what is necessary for the country. Fake news should be strongly discouraged so that the media may remain reliable for the masses. Media groups should propagate what is true and important. All the media houses must work to present what is better to highlight the real problems prevailing in the society.

The study offers the results in quantitative terms which are very rare to be seen in this field. Two empirical approaches have been used simultaneously in the same study. This would open new

horizons for the researchers working in this field. They would feel encouraged to use quantitative techniques in the field which was considered mostly qualitative in nature.

Appendix

(A- 1): Analysis of impact of media on policy agenda for Lahore

Media Variables	Is there any Impact on policy agenda?		
	Yes	No	Do not Know
Newspaper	70 38%	85 46%	30 16%
Magazine	25 14%	105 57%	55 29%
Books and Brochures	15 8%	136 74%	34 18%
Television	108 58%	55 29%	22 13%
Radio	53 29%	103 56%	29 15%
Mobile Phone	33 18%	109 59%	43 23%
Internet	65 35%	21 11%	99 54%

(A- 2): Analysis of impact of media on policy agenda for Faisalabad

Media Variables	Is there any Impact on policy agenda?		
	Yes	No	Do not Know
Newspaper	85 65%	16 12%	30 23%
Magazine	46 35%	56 43%	29 22%
Books and Brochures	45 34%	60 46%	26 20%
Television	93 71%	18 14%	20 15%
Radio	77 59%	33 25%	21 16%
Mobile Phone	51 39%	60 46%	20 15%
Internet	70 53%	39 30%	22 17%

(A- 3): Analysis of impact of media on policy agenda for Multan

Media Variables	Is there any Impact on policy agenda?		
	Yes	No	Do not Know

Newspaper	61 77%	15 19%	3 4%
Magazine	32 41%	40 51%	7 8%
Books and Brochures	30 38%	45 57%	4 5%
Television	65 82%	11 14%	3 4%
Radio	51 65%	21 27%	7 8%
Mobile Phone	25 32%	41 52%	13 16%
Internet	36 46%	35 44%	8 10%

(A- 4): Analysis of impact of media on policy agenda for Rawalpindi

	Is there any Impact on policy agenda?		
Media Variables	Yes	No	Do not Know
Newspaper	38 42%	32 36%	20 22%
Magazine	20 22%	55 61%	15 17%

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Books and Brochures	21 23%	53 59%	16 18%
Television	47 52%	25 28%	18 20%
Radio	36 40%	24 27%	30 33%
Mobile Phone	15 17%	50 56%	25 28%
Internet	33 37%	25 28%	32 35%

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