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The political cost of overpopulation: Challenges in lawmaking and stability

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Abstract

Population growth, often viewed negatively due to concerns about resource depletion and environmental strain, also holds the potential for positive outcomes, especially when considering a younger demographic. This paper examines the intricate relationship between population explosion, ethnic diversity, migration patterns, and their collective impact on political stability and governance. The strain of rapid population growth manifests in various ways, including pressure on public services, resource scarcity, and political frameworks. These challenges can restrict individual rights, diminish the quality of public services, and provoke dissatisfaction, sometimes escalating into protests or political unrest.

Ethnic diversity and migration further complicate the policymaking process, influencing electoral dynamics and governance. Political leaders face heightened pressure to address the demands of a growing and diverse population, especially during election campaigns where connecting with various groups becomes essential for electoral success. Post-election challenges include adjustments to assembly seat reservations under Article 170, which stipulates 60 to 500 seats. With population growth, the delimitation process, based on census data, becomes critical for ensuring fair representation.

The study also explores how population pressures affect other key areas, including per capita income, food and living space availability, currency valuation, caste reservations, and migration for employment opportunities. These factors collectively shape a nation's political, social, and economic fabric, influencing governance and the stability of political systems.

Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the researcher collected primary data through random sampling of college students and secondary data from articles, newspapers, and journals. Methods included interviews and questionnaires to assess the broader implications of population growth on political processes and governance.

This research highlights the dual-edged nature of population explosion, balancing its potential for fostering a younger, dynamic workforce with the challenges it poses to policy formulation, electoral dynamics, and public service delivery. Ultimately, the findings aim to provide insights into how demographic changes, ethnic diversity, and migration impact political systems and governance in an increasingly competitive and complex global landscape.

Keywords: Changes in delimitation acts, law-making process, population growth, migration pattern, electoral process

Introductions

Study overview

Political destabilization refers to the action of making a government, area, or political group lose power or control, or weakening a political or economic situation by causing changes and problems. While there are various causes for political destabilization, the root cause often lies in population explosion. Factors such as terrorism, war, and revolution also play significant roles in creating instability.

India faces destabilization through two primary avenues: external aggression and internal subversion. External threats arise from intimidating neighboring countries like China and Pakistan, while internal threats stem from intensified intra-social conflicts and disorder. These two factors interact significantly, amplifying governance challenges. Additionally, India's diversity, encompassing various religions and ethnic groups, has witnessed a growing demand for identity recognition, particularly religious identities. External forces have exploited these internal dissensions, further destabilizing the country.

Despite being the world's fifth-largest economy, India ranks 142nd in the political stability index, with -0.62 points, compared to Liechtenstein, which ranks first with 1.42 points. One key reason is population pressure. Liechtenstein, with only 37,000 inhabitants, benefits from a manageable population, enabling stable governance and efficient public services.

In contrast, India's large population exerts immense strain on its political and electoral systems, eroding trust in governance when the government is perceived as unresponsive or oppressive. The relationship between legislation and development becomes glaringly evident in the context of overpopulation. Legislation plays a crucial role in managing population growth and ensuring sustainable development, but it requires active cooperation from political party members and the public. Overpopulation challenges legislative frameworks, complicating policy implementation and enforcement. This impact extends to local governance, rural administrative structures, and even village-level administration, leading to significant changes. Overpopulation influences not just food shortages or unemployment but also politics—an often-overlooked dimension. Increased population exerts pressure on political leaders during election campaigns and governance, creating unstable political environments dominated by majority parties at the central level, often leaving states in precarious conditions. This research paper examines how overpopulation intertwines with law-making and politics, contributing to political destabilization, and explores potential strategies to address this pressing issue

Theoretical Framework

J Family Med Prim Care [2022] this article was published in aug 2022 where it consists of the information of UP government policy. Where this policy was repeated major points that were already said in national population policy 1981

Philos Trans R Soc Lond B Biol Sci. 2009 Oct 27 this article talks about the demographic transition and the theoretical and political framing of the population factor in development.

Thomas Malthus was an 18th-century British philosopher and economist noted for the Malthusian Theory according to him the population of country increases with the increase in food supply but this theory was criticized by saying the importance of modern farming technology.

Archisha Satyarthi [2019] ^[13] she writes an article about the Critical Analysis of Land Acquisition Act, 2013 which explains the point like its impacts and what that act means

Dr. Miro Cerar [2009] ^[14] this article discusses about "The Relationship Between Law and Politics" and it talks about the how the politics and law makings are co related with one another

Merritt, R. L. (1995) ^[2]

Population Imbalance and Political Destabilization.

Discusses how population imbalance can serve as a contributing factor to political instability by examining demographic shifts and their implications for governance.

Urdal, H. (2008) ^[3]

Population, Resources, and Political Violence: A Subnational Study of India, 1956-2002.

Analyzes the relationship between population growth, resource scarcity, and political violence, with a focus on

India's regional dynamics during the study period.

Census Data

Migration Sankey Chart by Census India

Offers insights into migration patterns and their impact on resource allocation and governance.

The Times of India (2023)

Population explosion causes political, social instability AICTE tells engineering colleges to spread awareness.

Explores the consequences of rapid population growth on political and social stability and emphasizes the need for public awareness campaigns.

Research Voids

Decline in Political Stabilization due to Ethnic Diversity

- Insufficient exploration of how ethnic diversity directly affects political stability, especially in regions with high migration inflows.
- Lack of data on whether political frameworks adapt effectively to increased ethnic diversity.

Overpopulation due to Unbalanced Migration

- Limited focus on migration as a driving force of overpopulation in specific regions, leading to unbalanced development.
- Absence of case studies analyzing regional disparities caused by migration.

Minds and Rights of Migrants Leading to Political Unrest

- Minimal analysis of the psychological impact on migrants and how perceived or actual denial of rights contributes to political unrest.

Representative Disconnect due to Rapid Population Growth

- Insufficient assessment of the communication gap between political representatives and citizens in rapidly growing populations.
- Lack of exploration of how this disconnect impacts governance and public trust.

Limitation in Individual Rights

- Gaps in investigating the extent and types of individual rights restricted under strained political systems.
- Limited examination of specific policies or acts that inadvertently restrict rights in overpopulated nations.

Population Growth and Crime Rates

- Limited quantitative research linking population growth to specific crime trends.
- Lack of sociological analysis on why population density might correlate with increased crime rates.

Research design and approaches

Primary Data

Primary data was collected using questioning and interviewing methods to examine the impacts of overpopulation on law-making and politics. The research was conducted in Kanchipuram district and southern Tamil Nadu, covering regions like Ramanathapuram, Sivaganga, and Madurai. Respondents included college students aged

18-23, lawyers with 15 years of experience, revenue officials with 12 years of experience, and members of the general public.

A random sampling method was employed to ensure a diverse pool of respondents. A total of 13 individuals participated, comprising 8 females and 7 males, aged 18 to 50, primarily employed individuals. The survey method facilitated the collection of statistical and analytical data, offering insights into public perspectives on the impact of law-making and politics.

Secondary Data

Secondary data for this research was collected from various sources, including government publications, libraries, journals, newspapers, magazines, websites, and existing research papers. This data provided insights into political riots, political indices, migration patterns, and challenges related to policymaking and the electoral process.

Secondary sources were instrumental in understanding the broader political setup of the country and contextualizing the primary data findings.

Data Integration and Analysis

The collected primary and secondary data were systematically integrated to ensure comprehensive analysis. Primary data offered firsthand insights from respondents, while secondary data provided contextual and historical background.

Statistical and analytical tools were employed to evaluate the data, identifying patterns and relationships between overpopulation, law-making, and political processes. This integrative approach ensured a balanced understanding of the research objectives and facilitated a nuanced interpretation of the findings.

Aims of the study

- To examine the relationship between population explosion and its influence on law-making.
- To analyze the political implications of rapid population growth, including governance challenges.
- To explore the socio-economic effects of population explosion on income, food security, and living conditions.
- To evaluate the role of migration in creating overpopulation and reshaping political and social structures.
- To study how ethnic diversity contributes to political destabilization.
- To investigate the link between overpopulation and limitations on individual rights.
- To assess the impact of rapid population growth on the quality and availability of public services.
- To explore the connection between population density and rising crime rates.
- To analyze how the rights and mindsets of migrants influence political unrest.
- To assess the effects of representative, disconnect caused by rapid population growth.
- To investigate the strains on the service sector caused by population growth and migration.
- To propose strategies for balancing population growth with governance while ensuring political and social stability.

Interpretation and insights

- **Migrants and ethnic division: straining “The state”:**
Conflict due to ethnic division play major role in affecting political stability. 81.4% of the respondents agreed to the statements. Violent ethnic conflict leads to tremendous human suffering. We could see the current Manipur violence it drastically affects the peace in the society. Conflicts rooted in ethnic divisions can indeed lead to political destabilization. Such conflicts often involve competing ethnic or cultural groups vying for power, resources, or recognition, and can escalate into violence or civil unrest. This destabilization can weaken governments, disrupt social cohesion, and hinder economic development. Migrants are also a reason for overpopulation. Fund allocation for migrants based on census. Census is taken once in ten years in India according to which fund is allocated for each state or districts, if immigrants occupy some amount of space there will issues based on fund allocation which is really a major problem because it also may end in internal riots and publics would start blaming the executives. The other issue would be, when immigrants express their opinions, these expressions can have broader political and social implications, especially in a diverse and pluralistic society like India.

Public Order and National Security: If an immigrant's expression challenges the core political or social fabric of India, such as advocating for the secession of a region or criticizing the Indian state in a way that could incite violence, the government might restrict their freedom of speech under the provisions of Article 19. For example, if an immigrant publicly expresses support for a foreign country or political ideology that is seen as harmful to India's sovereignty, it could trigger tensions and lead to national security concerns. For example, During the Kashmir conflict, people from Pakistan or Kashmiri immigrants who were outspoken about their support for the Kashmiri separatist movement have faced scrutiny. If their public speeches or statements are perceived as inciting violence or disrupting public order, they could be subject to legal action, even if they are protected by freedom of speech.

Religious and Cultural Sensitivities: Immigrants from countries with different religious practices might make statements that challenge or criticize India's majority Hindu practices or castes system, potentially creating unrest. For example, an immigrant from a Muslim-majority country might express views that some see as anti-Hindu or critical of India's secularism, which could create political tensions. For instance, The Rohingya refugee crisis has been a flashpoint for debates about immigration and citizenship. Immigrants fleeing violence in Myanmar have been subject to criticism from nationalist groups within India. Some have expressed fears that granting refugees freedom of speech could lead to a situation where their political statements could challenge the social or political order of India.

Reverberations of overpopulation on the administrative structure

The reverberations of overpopulation on the administrative structure at both state and district levels are significant. The entire state administrative framework relies on the district level, which in turn depends on the village administration. If

the village structure is robust, we can efficiently establish state-level administration. Due to overpopulation in the country, we are encountering numerous challenges in village administration. Once, the primary duty of Village Administrative Officers (VAOs) was to collect land revenue

and submit it to the government. However, now they are tasked with handling various essential certificates such as birth, death, income, and community certificates, as well as maintaining records related to village agriculture, among other responsibilities.

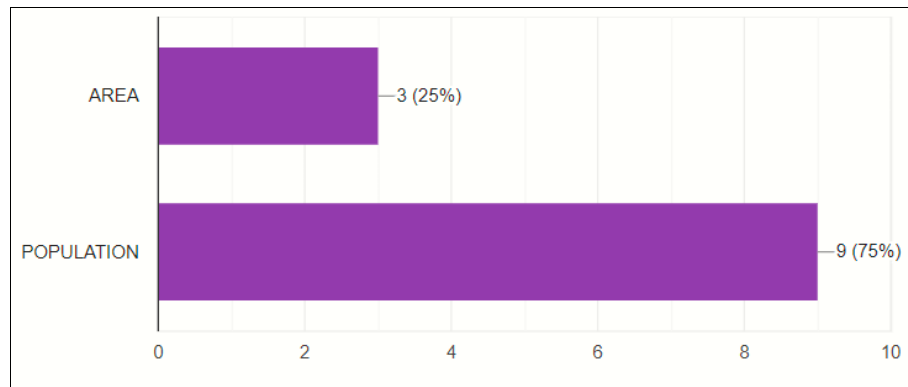


Fig 1: Impact of Overpopulation on Village Administrative Structure and Governance

From the data we collected, we came to know that 75% of people are in favor of splitting villages based on population, while 25% are opposed to it. According to the law, villages should be divided based on area, but due to overpopulation, this cannot be done. This is because it would increase the workload of Village Administrative Officers (VAOs) and panchayat members. If villages are divided based on population, it would accurately represent the density and impact of a place. Population is a crucial factor that administrators consider when making policies. It would also help them reduce their workload, especially for VAOs, allowing them to complete their tasks within a given period of time, instead of having pending tasks. Additionally, it would be beneficial for the government to effectively control and examine the population.

Furthermore, 61.5% of people believe that urbanization is causing changes in village administration. They argue that this may lead to a weakening of social control and create population variations in rural demographics. On the other hand, 38.5% believe that no significant changes have been observed in villages. They argue that only a few individuals are migrating to rural areas and are often compelled to return since their properties and belongings still belong to the village level, not the rural level. Additionally, agriculture is still predominantly practiced in villages, indicating that there hasn't been much change in village demographic conditions.

▪ **The erosion of democratic integrity**

In an ideal democracy, every citizen should have the right to engage in debates, discussions, and decisions that shape the country's future. This implies a well-informed electorate, where each person not only casts their vote freely but does so based on a genuine understanding of candidates' policies, capabilities, and values. However, the scenario changes drastically when the population increases at a rapid rate. In countries like India, where the population has crossed 1.4 billion, a key challenge is the sheer size and diversity of the electorate.

Representative Disconnect

Due to the massive population, the representative

democracy system—where elected officials represent the interests of the people—often results in a gap between the elected representatives and the constituents. These representatives may not have the time, resources, or capacity to understand or address each individual's specific issues. Money begins to play a significant role in influencing elections. The rise in vote-buying, which is a critical challenge to India's democracy. During elections in India, it's common for political parties, especially in rural areas, to distribute money, alcohol, or other material goods in exchange for votes. Politicians often promise cash or even employment in return for votes, effectively turning democracy into a transactional system where votes are bought rather than earned through persuasion, ideas, or promises. So the system transformed from "One Person, One Vote" to "One Rupee, One Note"

When votes are bought with cash or goods, elected representatives have little incentive to act in the long-term interests of their constituencies. Their primary concern is often to recover the money spent during the election campaign, which may lead to corrupt practices once they are in power. This cycle of corruption undermines the democratic process, as elected representatives are more likely to focus on short-term benefits for themselves or their supporters, rather than addressing larger issues such as healthcare, education, infrastructure, or economic development.

The other important issue is overpopulation leads to an exponential increase in demand for limited resources, such as water, land, food, and energy. Nearly 86% of respondents agreed to the statement. With more people competing for these resources, the government may feel compelled to implement policies that can limit individuals' freedom in order to preserve resources and ensure fairness across the population.

For example, consider the case of water scarcity. When the population of a country or region grows, the demand for water rises significantly, which can lead to depletion of water sources. In such scenarios, the government may implement measures like Restricting water usage. In Cape Town, South Africa, during the 2017-2018 drought, the city-imposed water usage restrictions due to severely reduced water levels in reservoirs. Residents were limited to 50 liters

of water per day per person, which is a drastic reduction from normal consumption. Policies such as family planning, water restrictions, or housing limits can lead to public dissatisfaction, especially if they disproportionately affect certain sections of society, like the poor or marginalized communities. Some population control measures such as forced sterilization, child limits, or restrictions on migration can raise human rights concerns if they are imposed too harshly or unfairly. These measures infringe upon

individuals' basic freedoms to make choices about their lives.

▪ **Population pressure on economic development**

We generally assume that a higher population in a country leads to increased tax revenue, which, in turn, contributes to the country's economic stability. However, when we examine things on a state-by-state basis, we encounter numerous fluctuations in GDPs and economic levels.

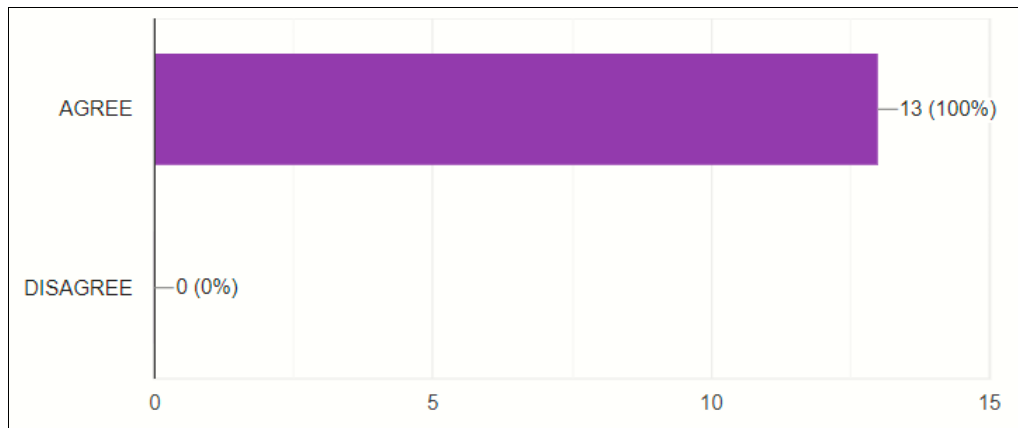


Fig 2: Impact of Population Pressure on Economic Development and Governance

Based on our data, 100% of the people agree that even though the population in Gangetic regions is high, their economic stability is not on par with South India. This is attributed to various factors such as higher literacy rates and a superior human development index in the southern regions. Additionally, the role of administration is crucial, as the population explosion has led to high unemployment rates. Governments are struggling to maintain harmony between the people and the economy in heavily populated states like Uttar Pradesh and a few in the northern regions. Unfortunately, they seem less focused on societal development and more concentrated on personal income. A major contributing factor highlighted was the lack of awareness in effectively utilizing resources.

▪ **Demographic condition and the state of policy making**

When we talk about democracy, the first thing that comes to mind is elections. We understand that demographics play a crucial role in shaping the political landscape of a country. Speaking specifically about India, it's impossible to describe it as a single entity with a uniform political landscape. Each state has its own unique political dynamics, sending their elected representatives to the parliament to form a union government. The majority of policies applicable to the entire nation are then adapted in the parliament after necessary majorities are secured by Lok Sabha members in the form of amendments. However, here we will discuss how this political landscape and policy-making process are affected by overpopulation.

Based on our research findings, we have gathered data from individuals, with 61.5% expressing the view that overpopulation exerts pressure on political parties, leading to shifts in their principles. Additionally, it places strain on states with fewer Lok Sabha members. This is particularly evident in cases where families consist of more than 7 to 8 members, all supporting a single party. This dynamic can lead to challenges for opposing parties, compelling them to adapt their campaign policies to address the concerns of these constituents.

In terms of Lok Sabha seats, we, the people of Tamil Nadu, still experience a degree of instability at the central level due to our allocation of only 40 seats. Consequently, to voice opposition to any policies not in the best interest of the people, we seek alliance parties that allow us to collectively oppose the implementation of such policies with a stronger count.

It's worth noting that despite the overall population increase in the country, the number of Lok Sabha seats has remained unchanged at 543 since 1996 through 2019. Analyzing the 2011 census data, we observe that states with the highest populations are Uttar Pradesh, accounting for 16.50% of the total population, followed by Maharashtra with 9.28%, and Bihar with 8.60%. This concentration of population in the northern regions may potentially increase drastically in the next census. This could lead to an adjustment in the Lok Sabha seats allocation, potentially favoring these regions and potentially reducing the majority in voting favor or opposition to policies introduced as bills in the Parliament.

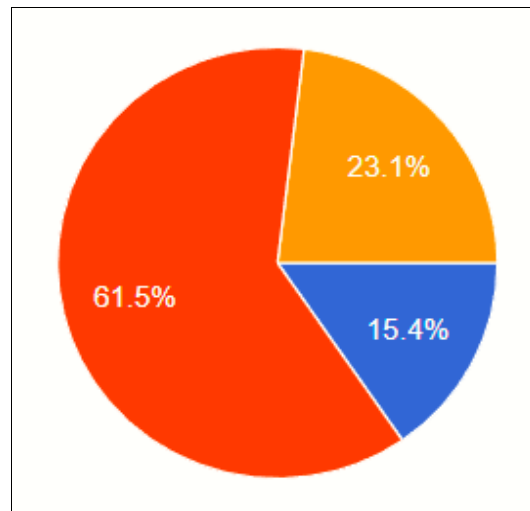


Fig 3: Impact of Population Growth on Political Representation and State-Level Policy-Making

This is important to consider, especially since the new parliament has a seat capacity of 888. Consequently, MPs from the northern regions may hold significant influence in the formation of the union government compared to their counterparts from other regions of the country. Similarly, when we examine the demographic conditions at the state level in conjunction with policy-making, the ramifications of population explosion become evident. This can lead to alterations in reservations and increased underemployment, creating an imbalance in the democratic landscape.

Consider the scenario where individuals migrate to a state aligned with a particular central party. In this situation, the votes of these migrants are likely to be in favor of the central party rather than the local state political party. This is because they hail from the same state and perceive the leaders of the central party as their own, which can result in viewing state political party leaders as outsiders or strangers.

Secondly, 23.1% of individuals believe that overpopulation is not exerting any pressure on the alteration of party principles. They see these principles as the foundation for the political party. Some argue that during each election, the leaders or members of that party encounter a different set of people during the canvassing process, with the count not being the same as compared to the previous election.

Lastly, 15.4% of people remain neutral, suggesting that policies should be adapted according to the prevailing situation. This category of people advises us to increase our state's population to achieve stability in politics, similar to how we have achieved stability in economics. This suggestion may lead to stability at the central level but instability in state politics. This is because, with a larger population, we may expect new politicians to emerge with new political parties, or they may join existing parties and introduce ideas that could potentially alter the foundational principles of that particular party.

Pressuring Services

Rapid population growth strains political institutions and increases pressure on services. Only a few democratic countries with serious demographic pressures remain stable. India, as a democratic country with various levels of administration, aims to provide services to even the bottom-most levels of society. However, due to population explosion, these services cannot be delivered effectively.

From the research, it was analyzed that 73.8% of respondents agreed that population creates pressure on services, leading to political destabilization. The enormous population requires increased service from both the public and private sectors, creating significant pressure on these sectors. This situation leads to problems in decision-making due to the diverse and conflicting opinions from various groups. Consequently, this confusion in decision-making results in political instability.

Additionally, implementing decisions becomes an even greater task for government officers, causing many well-conceived plans to fall behind. In cities with exploding populations, public transport systems become overwhelmed, making daily commutes difficult and uncomfortable. This results in longer travel times, decreased productivity, and a lower quality of life.

Example

- In Mumbai, the local train network, which serves over 7.5 million people daily, operates at full capacity, leading to overcrowding, accidents, delays, and safety issues.

The growth of the population is also proportional to the rise in crimes, which puts additional stress on the police force to maintain societal peace. Areas experiencing rapid population growth, particularly urban slums or informal settlements, often face dire economic conditions. This leads to an increase in property crimes such as theft, burglary, and robbery, which strains the police force and judicial system.

Synthesis of Findings

Vast population growth is one of the chief dangers of our times. Population imbalance and uncontrolled migration fuel a perception of population danger, contributing significantly to political destabilization. Various measures have been taken by governments to curb such rapid population growth, but these efforts have not yielded substantial impact on society. Such enormous population growth poses major challenges to the country's development, making it difficult to achieve the status of a developed nation. To attain such a state, it is essential to address and tighten measures against population explosion to create opportunities for progress. Overpopulation creates pressure in all three interconnected

processes: administration, lawmaking, and politics. Population dynamics exert significant influence on every facet of a country, including its economy and governance. Administration, which is primarily focused on satisfying people's needs, becomes the first to face pressure as the population grows, followed by political and legislative challenges. Changes at one level inevitably ripple across other levels, magnifying the impact. Through research, it becomes evident that political riots and corruption worsen the peace and functionality of the country. Overpopulation does not merely affect the political framework but extends its influence to economic development, healthcare services, resource distribution, and basic amenities. A smaller population enables the government to address public needs more efficiently, while a larger population complicates and delays this process.

Creating awareness among youth and engaging them in the nation's development can mitigate many of these issues due to their young and innovative minds. However, if the current trajectory continues, managing the future as we live today will pose an immense challenge for the government. Population explosion remains a pressing concern, and it necessitates the modification of policies to address the rapid growth rate. To uplift a developed and peaceful nation, we must work harder and smarter than ever before.

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