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The Editorial Coverage on Climate Change in Context of Other Emerging Environmental Issues: A Comparative Analysis of English and Urdu Print Media of Pakistan

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Abstract: This study explores the editorial coverage of climate change in terms of increasing unpredictable changes in weather conditions and its associated problems in Pakistan. The main focus of the researcher is to analyse the editorial coverage on the issue of Climate Change in Pakistani print media. For this, primary data have been collected from editorials published in two renowned newspapers of Pakistan, the Daily Dawn and the Daily Jang, from the year 2018 to 2019. Results showed that the Daily Jang had given more coverage to the emerging environmental issues than the Daily Dawn during a particular time. But when it comes to a specific environmental issue like Climate Change, the Daily Dawn has given more coverage to the said issue as compared to its counterpart. An exploratory quantitative research paradigm is used to perform content analysis. The research aims to sensitise all concerned stakeholders in making environment-friendly policies for the well-being of the public.

Key Words: Climate Change, Emerging Environmental Issues, Editorial Coverage, Print Media.

Introduction

The Last two decades have witnessed the increasing awareness of deteriorating environmental conditions like global warming, Climate Change, Unexpected respites of intense weather, Water Scarcity, prolonged summer season etc., all over the world. These climate changes have sparked threatening situations for the masses regarding Natural disasters compromising public safety on a large scale. In 1992, United Nations framed a work convention on climate change and clearly agreed to "Stabilise greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system." Print media has always been an influential tool in propagating ideas to the common public. Although, with advancements in science and technology, electronic media has gained much popularity,

yet still print media is considered more authentic and preserve the able source of information and opinion-building for educated and mature public (Gaur 2014). The theme or title of any editorial plays a very vital role in depicting the level of priority or worthiness of any issue. Now there is a lot of diversity in creating the content of editorials. Conventional topics attract lesser now. There is a new paradigm shift in the field of editorial writing. Developmental issues are more discussed and secured a decent place in comparison to political issues.

By keeping in view the rapid changes in the global environment, Pakistan is also among those affected countries who have been severe victims of disastrous outcomes of rapidly deteriorating environmental conditions. According to a recent report issued by the White House under 'First US Action Plan on Global Water Security, the

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South Asian water crisis is rising to an alarming level ([Daily Dawn 2022](#)). Rising temperatures, intense heat waves, heavy rainfall, floods, earthquakes and melting glaciers have rang the bell for all stakeholders in Pakistan. In developing countries like Pakistan, which is already facing many economic, political and social problems, climatic issues didn't get that proper coverage by print media in the last few decades. But with the passage of time, both Pakistani Urdu and English print media has been playing an undeniable role in reporting on such environmental issues, in the wake of promoting an enhanced awareness on the part of the public with a view to seeking some possible solutions to these emerging environmental threats. It is imperative to design a study to analyse and explore the media reporting on various environmental issues, with special reference to Pakistani print media. The present study has been framed to probe the different aspects of above mentioned environmental anomalies, especially climate change in Pakistan.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the total frequency of editorials published on all the emerging environmental issues in print media of Pakistan within a specific time frame.
- To measure the level of prioritisation of various emerging environmental issues in print media during a specific time frame.
- To determine the coverage frequency of specific environmental issues of climate change covered by the print media within the given time frame.
- To present the comparative analysis of two leading newspapers of Pakistan in framing the respective editorials on climate change.

Research Question

To conduct the present study, the following main research question was formulated:

- What is the frequency of editorials on all emerging environmental issues

published in "Daily Jang" and "Daily Dawn" during 2018-2019?

Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis was framed to further explore the issue:

- It is more likely that the frequency of editorials on climate change published in "Daily Dawn" is more than that of editorials published in "Daily Jang".

Delimitation

The current study was delimited to editorials on emerging environmental issues, specifically on climate change and its effects in terms of coverage in Daily Jang and Daily Dawn from 1st January 2018 to 31st December 2019 (2 Years).

Review of Literature

The importance of the natural environment in any individual's life is so obvious that we cannot eliminate this factor for the survival of present and future generations. Many human-induced factors are responsible for the drastic alteration of environmental sustainability. [Easterling et al. \(2007\)](#) propose that changes in the environment may lead to having an effect on the ecological systems of the areas. He furthermore opined about environmental-change impacts on ecological things like rangeland, fisheries and backwoods and so on. Specialists inferred that because of environmental change, smallholders would experience some consequences. [Lal et al. \(2011\)](#) assert that people of South Asia constitute one-fifth of the total world population. They further opined that these people reside in an unsafe and disastrous zone of the world. The climate of this region is also hostile, offering a hard lifestyle for locals. Shanahan (2011), in his examination, concentrated on expressing that media is a significant source to instruct individuals with respect to environmental change. It has a strong capacity to illuminate the public about the perilous impacts caused by earth warming. [Yadav and Rani \(2011\)](#) favour the role of media in educating and helping individuals about climate change.

[Chinenye et al. \(2015\)](#) in his research highlight the role of media coverage on climate change. The main focus of this study was to find the process and concern about the presentation of problems related to environmental changes. For the data collection and content analysis, three Nigerian newspapers (Vanguard, Guardian and Daily Sun newspaper) were chosen for research. Data from four months were collected to observe the coverage of these newspapers on climate change. The result of the study was not appropriate as these newspapers had limited coverage. So the research emphasises the strong role of print media in voicing the issues related to climate change on a daily basis in order to create awareness in Nigeria. [Nor et al. \(2015\)](#) conducted research in Malaysia to trace the coverage of media on emerging issues of climate variation in the country. The main objective of this study was to observe the media's role in highlighting the issues related to environmental challenges. For the content analysis, data from four well-known newspapers were collected during the time of 2008 to 2010. For the analysis, news articles on global environmental issues were collected in the study. Results of the study clearly revealed the moderate coverage of Malaysian print media on climate change which is also influenced by overall events associated with climate variations. [Uzelgun & Castro \(2015\)](#) conducted research to find the role of print media in the representation of climate change in developing countries like Turkey. To achieve the purpose, researchers selected the news section of two Turkish mainstream newspapers. Findings of the study indicate an increase in coverage of environmental problems as alarming issues during the selected study period from the mid of year 2000 to 2007. [Simon & Samahon \(2019\)](#) conducted an interesting study to find the changing trends in coverage of environmental issues in print media with changing political scenarios. A comparison was made between four top U.S newspapers and two local newspapers of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on the changes in coverage of climate change during the last year of Obama and the first year of the Trump administration. Contents analysis was done

by considering all coverage in terms of article, opinion and editorials content and also the focal point of newspapers. The study revealed that coverage of climate change in national newspapers remained the same, but the local papers showed a significant drop in climate issues coverage.

In countries like Pakistan which is already facing problems of terrorism, religious intolerance, poverty, energy storage and slow economic growth, the topic of the environment is a topic little discussed. Even after experiencing the consistent effects of climate change in the form of melting of glaciers, heat waves and floods, the topic of environmental issues has not been given the importance by national dailies of the country that these issues deserved in the past. [Iqbal et al. \(2014\)](#) also raised a question on the implementation of a code of conduct while covering any natural disaster. The study concluded that the role of media is very crucial in disaster time, but no channel is observing any code of conduct while being in the race of first reporting about disaster events. [Zaheer \(2015\)](#) examined the media coverage of a specific incident of the Tharparker famine that happened in 2014 in Sindh, Pakistan. For this study, four highly circulated Urdu and English newspapers were selected for data collection. For the content analysis, the researcher analysed editorials and news stories of selected newspapers regarding the coverage of the pre and post-famine period as the product of climate change. The study concluded that Urdu newspapers gave more coverage to famine compared to English newspapers. One thing in common is that both Urdu and English newspapers gave more coverage to the post-famine period as compared to the pre-famine phase. [Zaheer \(2016\)](#) questioned the role of media in covering the natural disaster by quoting the case of the earthquake of 2005, the flood of 2010 and the famine in 2014. The study raised questions on media social responsibility while covering pre and post-disaster phases. By applying social responsibility, the study suggested that the media should give more coverage to precautions before the happening of disaster

rather than after. The study also indicated that there should be a strict code of conduct to follow while reporting the time of disasters. [Riaz \(2018\)](#) talked about the devastating effects of environmental changes in the last few

years, which Pakistan has experienced in the form of disastrous floods, alarming famine in Thar and Balochistan, and heat stroke in Karachi, responsible for the death of 1200 people in 2015. The prevailing situation of environmental changes required an active role of media to create awareness among the general public and draw the attention of Government officials and policymakers on these alarming issues and especially coping with its impacts on our society. We can achieve our desired goal through active and responsible coverage of print media to mitigate the consequences of these environmental issues in order to improve the resilience of communities due to its vast access to common people. [Sharif and Medvecky \(2018\)](#) explored the responsible factors for low coverage of climate change in media despite the prevailing alarming situation of these issues in their study. Researchers discussed important financial, political, cultural and scientific factors in this qualitative study which influenced the media coverage of climate change in Pakistan.

Research Methodology

A quantitative research paradigm was applied for the purpose of data collection and data analysis. The data were collected from two leading newspapers, one Urdu and one English newspaper, being published regularly in Pakistan. The rationale for selecting two dailies of different languages is that it will explain how and at what level the two dailies have covered this specific issue. Moreover, what kind of editorial treatment has been

given to other emerging environmental issues within the specified time limit. The Daily Jang and the Daily Dawn, published from 1st January 2018 to 31st December 2019, were selected as a source for sampling. Every editorial from the selected newspapers was carefully read by the researcher to dig out the topic, theme and narrative of the editor. The editorial page is said to be the place where any newspaper disseminates its policy, opinion or viewpoint on any national or international issue. Moreover, the editorials are considered to be the best source for creating public opinion and educating the people at large. Content analysis was performed to obtain themes and categories of different environmental issues specifically focused on the issue of climate change in the editorials coverage. Now the question arises that why climate change is being chosen as a specific topic of comparison between these two well-known newspapers of Pakistan? The answer is simple all environmental issues are directly or indirectly linked with climate change, either as the cause like global warming or as the effects of this problem in terms of natural disasters. Therefore, Climate Change is considered to be the root cause of all other environmental issues discussed in this study.

Data Analysis

The data of the present study got accumulated in textual form. It was deemed by the researcher that content analysis would be the appropriate tool for the purpose of data analysis and interpretation. The following table 1 presents the detail of the total coverage of emerging environmental issues from the data obtained from editorials published in the English newspaper Daily Dawn and Urdu newspaper Daily Jang.

Table 1. Total editorial coverage on emerging environmental issues.

Year	Daily Dawn	Daily Jang
2018	31	40
2019	48	64
Total	79	104

Source: Content analysis (2018 -2019)

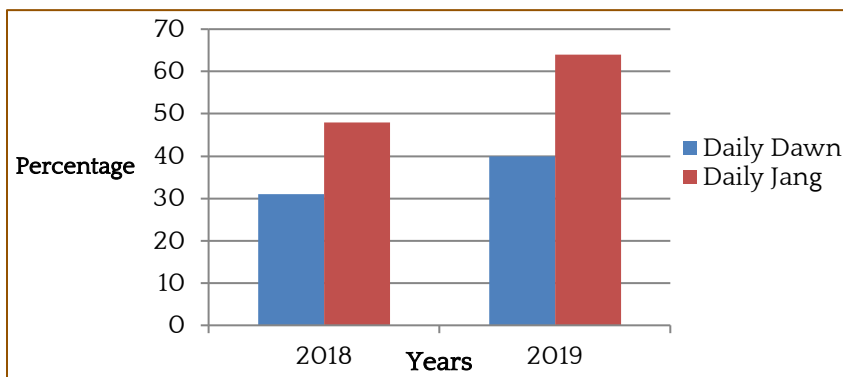


Figure 1: Graphical representation of Table 1

Table 1 also satisfies the research question of finding the total frequency coverage in a selected newspaper published in the selected time frame. The results of the comparative data analysis indicated that the number of articles published in Daily Jang was observed to be more in number than those published in daily Dawn during the selected period of two years.

Content analysis of Daily Dawn and Daily Jang

In 2018 Daily Jang covered more stories on environmental issues than Daily Dawn. 40 editorials were published in Daily Jang on environmental issues in comparison to 31 editorials in Daily Dawn. But there is a huge difference in the area of interest for covering the environmental issues in both newspapers

Table 2. Percentage of Editorial coverage of all emerging environmental issues.

Year	Newspaper	Total editorials	Water issues		Smog/Pollution		Climate Change		Deforestation	
			No's	%	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
2018	Daily Dawn	31	08	26	10	32	10	03	10	
	Daily Jang	40	28	70	05	12	04	10	03	8

Source: Content analysis (2018)

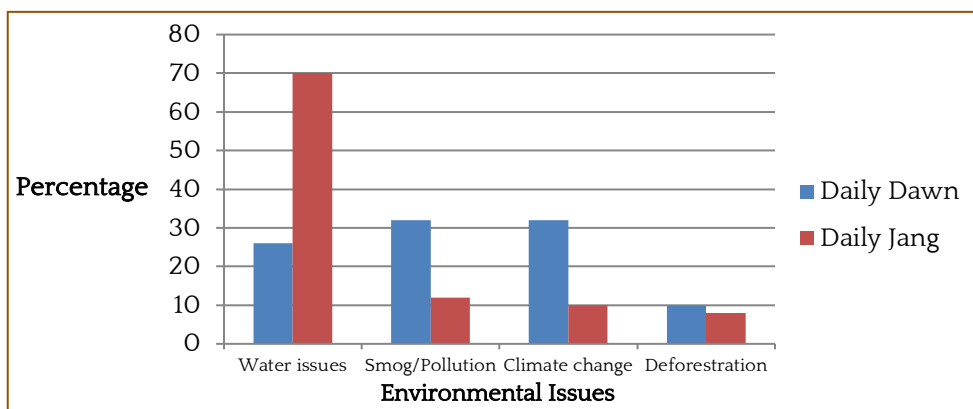


Figure 2: Graphical representation of Table 2

Smog/pollution shared a leading position along with climate change with 10 (32%) published editorials in Daily Dawn. Climate Change and its effects are also an important topic of discussion, brought into the light by analysing the content on melting glaciers, Thar drought, increasing shadow of hunger, ozone depletion, endangered wildlife and alarming food security issue. The focus of editorials is mainly on creating awareness of the challenges and threats created by Climate Change. Floods in Lahore are discussed as the effects of climate change in editorials. Water issues with 8 (26%) editorials in 2018 scored the second position in total coverage in Daily Dawn. Water scarcity, disputes on the water between Pakistan and India and the importance of dam construction remained in the limelight during coverage. The environmental issue of deforestation was discussed in 3 (10%) editorials in the Daily Dawn newspaper. Content of editorials for deforestation mostly on KPK government steps for planting trees and on the alarming situation that how the area under forests getting demolished for commercial use.

As noticed at the start of the data analysis that there is a difference in the priority of covering the environmental issue in both

selected Urdu and English dailies. In Daily Jang, the researcher has observed more attention on coverage of water issues. Data in Table 2 showed an interesting fact that Water Issues achieved the top position with 28 editorials, about 70% of total coverage during the year 2018. Dam construction, increasing aggression between Pakistan and India and water scarcity, in general, remained hot issues in editorials coverage. Smog/ pollution coverage stood second in ranking with 5 (12%) published stories on the issue of precautionary measures during public travel in smog and on problems associated with increasing air pollution. Climate change failed to get attention in terms of total coverage, with only 4 (10%) editorials published on climate change in 2018 in Daily Jang as compared to Daily Dawn, where the issue of climate change got the leading position in coverage of all discussed emerging environmental issues. Debate on the heat wave and how it brought changes in climate can endanger human beings encircled the environmental issue of Climate Change in printed editorials of Daily Jang. Deforestation jumped down in ranking with only 3 (8%) editorials in Daily Jang during 2018, suggesting a pragmatic approach and steps towards the plantation of trees.

Table 3. Percentage of Editorial coverage of all emerging environmental issues in 2019.

Year	Newspaper	Total editorials	Water issues		Smog/ Pollution		Climate Change		Deforestation	
			No's	%	No's	%	No's	%	No's	%
2019	Daily Dawn	48	10	21	16	33	20	42	02	4
	Daily Jang	64	19	30	25	39	20	31	0	0

Source: Content analysis (2019)

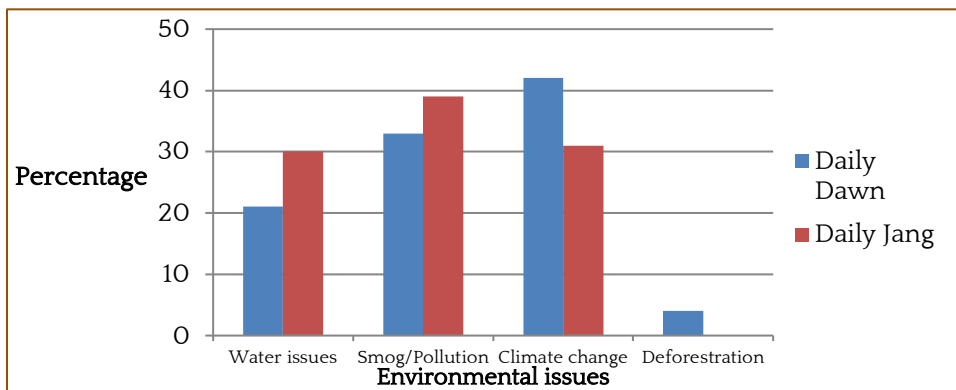


Figure 3: Graphical representation of Table 3

Editorial coverage on environmental issues showed an increase in number from 31 in 2018 to 48 publications in Daily Dawn in 2019. Climate change again secured the leading position among other environmental issues covered in editorials in the year 2019. With a number of 20 (42%) published editorials, climate change emerged as a core environmental issue in 2019 in Daily Dawn. Alarming but not unexpected position of Pakistan in the Global Climate Risk Index, no realisation of climate change as the major issue at the Government level and ignoring this issue at the global level discussed as climate change problems in editorials. Attack of Locust invasion affecting the crops production, destruction caused by havoc rainfall in different areas of country and earthquake in Northern Punjab and Azad Kashmir, all these issues highlighted the effects of climate change in editorials content. With a number of 16 (33%) published editorials, Smog/Pollution emerged as the second most dangerous environmental issue in 2019 in terms of coverage in Daily Dawn. With the publication of deteriorating water quality for crops and human use in Baluchistan, the presence of heavy metals in water in Karachi, and plastic waste in the ocean, water pollution is discussed more than any other kind of pollution. On the other hand, deteriorating air quality, medical plastic waste, poor cleanliness conditions in big cities and dangerous smog are described as the issues of pollution in editorials content of Daily Dawn newspaper. Water Issues constantly got the importance in publication with 10 (21%) editorials in the year 2019. The issue of water scarcity and the importance of dam construction remained the major topic of discussion in editorials. The theme of deforestation is again found on the bottom in terms of coverage, with a total publication of 2 (4%) editorials. Plantation in urban areas to make the environment clean and campaign about clean green Pakistan covered as the leading story of deforestation in published content by Daily Dawn.

Like Daily Dawn, the frequency of editorials on environmental issues coverage showed a remarkable increase from 40 in 2018 to 64 stories in 2019 on the said problems in Daily Jang. Frequency

distribution in Table 3 presents Smog/Pollution (S/P) as the leading topic in discussion, with 25 (39%) editorials on this emerging environmental issue. The main approach of editorials on pollution remained suggestive, focused on cleanliness in big cities like Karachi and Lahore and requested a complete ban on polythene bags. Proper maintenance of all transport vehicles, disposal of heaps of garbage, increasing air and water pollution associated with health issues, and for the first time, debate on noise pollution also brought into the discussion. The environmental topic of climate change attained attention with 20 (31%) published editorials in Daily Jang. Areas of interest in Climate Change referred to as heat strokes in Karachi, global warming and how changing weather affects the cultivation of the major crop in Pakistan. Effects of climate changes highlighted with covered stories on havoc rainfall in Karachi and Baluchistan, improvement in predictions and implementation of safety measures before such disasters, land sliding and causalities due to electric current in Karachi during rainfall also brings in the notice in covered stories. Water Issue remained in the limelight with 19 (30%) editorials coverage. Editorial content showed suggestive concerns as adopting immediate strategies for water conservation like construction of small dams across the country, cultivation of olive in a dry region, implementation of taxes on water companies, less cultivation of eucalyptus trees and making saline water fit for human use after treating in laboratories. Diplomatic war on the water between Pakistan and its neighbour country India is still alive in editorials coverage as a conversation on the water between these two nations continued in the year 2019 after some break. Water scarcity is also discussed from the perspective of lowering the water table in Lahore, shortage of water supply for irrigation purposes in Quetta and less access to clean and safe drinking water throughout the country. Surprisingly issue of deforestation got no attention in editorials coverage during the year 2019 in Daily Jang.

Comparison of Daily Dawn with Daily Jang in the context of Climate Change

To test the research hypothesis, the frequency of the total number of articles published in Daily Dawn was compared to that published in Daily Jang during the years 2018 and 2019.

This comparison showed that more articles regarding environmental issues were published in daily Jang than those published in daily Dawn on the same topic. Hence it verifies the hypothesis that Daily Dawn has given more coverage to climate change than Daily Jang in the selected time frame.

Table 4. Comparison of Editorial coverage on Climate Change in context to coverage of other emerging environmental issues.

Year	Newspaper	Total editorials on environmental issues	Editorials on Climate Change		Ranking in prioritisation
			No's.	%	
2018	Daily Dawn	31	10	32	1 st
	Daily Jang	40	04	10	3 rd
2019	Daily Dawn	48	20	42	1 st
	Daily Jang	64	20	31	2 nd

Source: Content analysis (2018-2019)

Interesting results came after the analysis of data. As compared to 79 editorials in Daily Dawn, Daily Jang has given more coverage to environmental issues with 104 editorials during the same time period of two years, from 2018 to 2019. The situation is entirely different when we analysed the percentage coverage on specific environmental issues of climate change. In 2018, Daily Dawn gave 32% total coverage in editorials as compared to only 10% editorial coverage in Daily Jang. In 2019 Daily Dawn again gained a lead in the publication of climate change issues with 42% editorials coverage over 31% coverage in published material. While discussing prioritisation, the issue of climate change ranked 1st in total editorials coverage of Daily Dawn in a selected time of 2018 to 2019. Coverage on the issue of climate change showed an improvement in ranking from 3rd in 2018 to 2nd in 2019 in Daily Jang.

Discussion

The present study has been designed to present a comparative analysis of the standpoints of two leading newspapers of Pakistan over environmental issues, specifically on the issue of climate change. The results of the study show that environmental problems have been a burning issue during the years 2018- 2019. The issues of climate change, Smog, Pollution, Floods, Water management and many others found

an important place in the editorials published in both Urdu and English newspapers in Pakistan. It indicates that the print media has tried to play a positive role in creating public awareness regarding different environmental issues. Recent years have shown a more hostile face of mother nature in terms of destruction caused to human beings due to various natural calamities and disasters. Both dailies have emerged as front-liner in presenting environmental issues and propagating public awareness regarding the severity of the problem. Public awareness becomes very vital at this stage as no government alone can handle the issue of global warming and its frightening consequences in terms of megafloods, severe droughts, sweltering smog, and intense hot weather. The daily Jang might be read by more people as it is published in the Urdu language. This newspaper has played a commendable role in highlighting different environmental issues being raised in Pakistan recently. On the other hand daily Dawn, being a prestigious English newspaper of Pakistan, has also contributed to spread public awareness to a more educated public. It becomes obligatory for all of us to take measures for the betterment of our natural environment because human beings have been seen as the direct affectees of any natural disaster occurring due to the destabilisation of our ecosystem. Global warming has been forecasting an impending

danger for the masses of Pakistan steadily during the past few years. A joint venture of the government and the public together to solve these environmental issues may be the need of the hour.

Recommendations

The study may recommend that future researchers should plan extensive studies to encompass the role of print as well as electronic media in spreading awareness among all public and other stakeholders. Similarly, the role of social media should also be evaluated in this context. Diversity in

environmental issues also opens new horizons for future researchers. In order to measure the role of media, future researchers can apply different strategies. By using different time spans with different components of media like social and electronic media, the coverage on environmental issues can be observed. As far as role of print media is concerned, the print media should give more space to the editorials on environmental issues. It will increase the level of awareness and will also sensitise the public and policymakers of Pakistan.

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