
Ukrainians bring down Yanukovich regime, 2013-2014

- [an example of paradox of repression](#) [1]
- [an example of regime change](#) [2]
- [included participation by more than one social class](#) [3]

Timing

November

2013

to:

February

2014

Location and Goals

Country:

Ukraine

Location City/State/Province:

Kiev, Ukraine

[View Location on Map](#)

Goals:

The resignation of President Viktor Yanukovich.

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 005. Declarations of indictment and intention>Jailed opposition leader Yulia Tymoshenko denounces Yanukovich and calls on to Ukrainians to protest.
- 038. Marches>Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovy leads a march of 5,000 throughout the city on 23 November.
- 038. Marches>Thousands of Ukrainians march through Kiev after police attempt to disperse the Maidan occupation on 30 November.
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support>10,000 Ukrainians gather at the Maidan occupation to call for Yanukovich's resignation during the EU summit on 29 November.
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support>100,000 Ukrainians gather at Independence Square on 24 November.
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support>Between 300,000 and 350,000 Ukrainians gather at the Maidan occupation on 1 December.
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support>Several hundred Ukrainians gather in Independence Square to protest Yanukovich's decision to end talks with the EU.
- 113. Strike by resignation>Yanukovich's chief of staff Sergiy Liovochkin resigns on 30 November in support of the Maidan protests.

- 172. Nonviolent obstruction ›Ukrainians blockaded the Cabinet Ministry building on 2 December.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Several thousand Ukrainians begin the Maidan occupation of Independence Square on 24 November.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Ukrainians break into Kiev City Hall and begin an occupation.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Ukrainians occupy multiple Trade Union buildings near Kiev City Hall on 2 December.

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 001. Public speeches ›Arseny Yatsenyuk and Vitali Klitscho denounced President Yanukovich's round-table talks on 13 December.
- 037. Singing ›Ukrainians sing the national anthem throughout the Maidan occupation.
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›800,000 Ukrainians rally at the Maidan on 8 December.
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›Between 150,000 and 300,000 Ukrainians rallied at the Maidan on 15 December.
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›Roughly 100,000 Ukrainians rally at the Maidan on 20 December.
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›Tens of thousands of protesters rally at the Maidan on 18 December.
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction ›Ukrainians blockaded the streets surrounding the Presidential headquarters on 8 December.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Protest leaders continue the occupations at City Hall and the Trade Union buildings near the Maidan.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Protesters take over the the International Center for Culture and Art adjacent to the Maidan on 9 December.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Ukrainians continue the Maidan occupation at Independence Square.

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Ukrainians continue the Maidan occupation at Independence Square.

Methods in 4th segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›50,000 protesters gather at the Maidan to protest the violence against civilians used in the 10 January demonstrations.
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›Thousands of Ukrainians gather at the Maidan to protest the anti-protest laws on 19 January.
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction ›100 protesters attempt to obstruct the police vehicles carrying out the three convicted men on 10 January.
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction ›Protesters blockade the streets leading to the Maidan on 21 January.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Demonstrators in Lviv occupied their regional administration building on 23 January.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Ukrainians continue the Maidan occupation at Independence Square.

Methods in 5th segment:

- 038. Marches ›2,000 Ukrainians marched against Yanukovich in Odessa on 26 January,
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›1,500 citizens in Dnipropetrovsk and 5,000 in Zaporizhzhya rallied against Yanukovich on 26 January.
- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›Demonstrations occur in the central Ukrainian cities of Khmelnytsky, Zhytomyr, and Cherkasy, and the western cities of Lviv, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lutsk, Rivne, and Chernivtsi on 24 January.

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›Tens of thousand of protesters gather at the Maidan on 2 February.
- 172. Nonviolent obstruction ›Demonstrators blockage a government building in Chernihiv on 25 January.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Opposition forces continue to occupy Kiev city hall and nearby Trade Union buildings.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Opposition forces continue to occupy the Lviv regional administration building.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Opposition forces seize and occupy the Justice Ministry in Kiev on 26 January.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Thousands of protesters in Vinnytsia occupy the regional administration building on 25 January.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Ukrainians continue the Maidan occupation at Independence Square.

Methods in 6th segment:

- 047. Assemblies of protest or support ›Tens of thousands of Ukrainians rally at the Maidan on 16 February.
- 113. Strike by resignation ›Policemen from Lviv defected and vowed to protect the Maidan.
- 113. Strike by resignation ›Twelve members of Yanukovych's party resigned in response to the killings on protesters on 20 February.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Opposition forces continue to occupy the Lviv regional administration building.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Protesters in Lviv retook the regional administration building and seized a military compound.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Protesters in Uzhgorod, Lutsk, Khmelnytsky, and Poltava took over police stations and regional administrative buildings on 19 February.
- 173. Nonviolent occupation ›Ukrainians continue the Maidan occupation at Independence Square.

Segment Length:

15 days

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Democracy

Group characterization:

- Ukrainian citizens.

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Oleh Tyahniboh of the nationalist Svoboda party, Vitaly Klitschko of the Democratic Alliance for Reform Party, and Arseny Yatsenuk of the Fatherland party, occupiers at the Maidan.

External allies:

The United States Embassy in Kiev, the U.S State Department, the United Nation secretary general, the President of the European Commission, the European Union's foreign policy chief, U.S Vice President Joseph Biden.

Involvement of social elites:

Members of Parliament, the speaker of Parliament Volodymyr Rybak, former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, the Mayor of Lviv, multibillionaires Rinat Akhmetov and Petro Poroshenko all supported the Maidan movement.

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:

- Ukrainian citizens
- the Fatherland opposition party
- the Svoboda nationalist party
- the Ukraine Democratic Alliance for Reform.

Groups in 2nd Segment:

Groups in 3rd Segment:

Groups in 4th Segment:

- AutoMaidan.

Groups in 5th Segment:

- EuroMaidan SOS
- Red Sector
- and in Odessa.
- demonstrators in the city of Chernihiv
- demonstrators in the city of Dnipropetrovsk
- demonstrators in the city of Poltava
- demonstrators in the city of Vinnytsia
- demonstrators in the city of Zaporizhzhya

Groups in 6th Segment:

Segment Length:

15 days

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

President Viktor Yanukovich.

Campaigner violence:

Demonstrators consistently clashed with the police throughout the 4th, 5th, and 6th segments, throwing firebombs and stones at officers and using sticks to fight with police in streets. Some protesters within the Maidan attempted to maintain nonviolence, sometimes even protecting police officers from the attacks by other demonstrators.

Opposition leaders, especially Arseny Yatsenyuk of the Fatherland party, called on protesters multiple times to refrain from using violence. However, on 22 January Vitali Klitscho of the UDAR party threatened to join the street fighting if Yanukovich did not concede.

Preliminary evidence suggests that the overwhelming majority of participants in the campaign did not threaten

or use injurious force (the GNAD's definition of violence).

Repressive Violence:

Police shot and killed two protesters on 22 January. Throughout the 4th segment, police used stun grenades and rubber bullets to repel protesters. 25 people, including nine police officers, died in clashes on 18 February, and 77 people died from lethal gunfire used by police on 20 February.

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

6 points out of 6 points

Survival:

1 point out of 1 points

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

Total points:

10 out of 10 points

In 2004 the Ukrainian people heard reports that Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich rigged the presidential elections so he could step in as Ukraine's new president. The people's campaign of strikes and protests forced a re-run election that was fairly contested, and was won by opposition candidate Viktor Yushchenko. [Ukrainians overthrow dictatorship (Orange Revolution), 2004.]

In the next election, five years later, the formerly ousted Yanukovich was able to bounce back and win the presidential election against the Orange Revolution's hero Yushchenko. Once in office President Yanukovich confronted a rival who now held the role of Prime Minister, Yulia Tymoshenko of the Fatherland Party. In October 2011 President Yanukovich arrested and jailed her, charging abuse of power.

President Yanukovich held talks aimed at building a close relationship with the European Union. In November 2013 Yanukovich abruptly suspended those talks even though many Ukrainians supported them. The still-jailed former prime minister Tymoshenko released a message urging Ukrainians to protest the suspension of talks, and on 22 November about a thousand people responded in Independence Square in the capital city of Kiev.

The following day opposition leaders in Parliament, including the Fatherland Party, called for the impeachment of President Yanukovich and for mass protests. Demonstrators then held protests in several Ukrainian cities. In the large Western city of Lviv, a stronghold of anti-Yanukovich sentiments, Mayor Andriy Sadovy led a march of 5,000 people

The next day, 24 November, 100,000 Ukrainians joined the Kiev protests and launched an occupation of Independence Square. The occupation came to be called "the Maidan." Police set up a cordon to contain the crowd; when protesters attempted to break through, police fired tear gas.

The president also had popular support. That same day 10,000 pro-Yanukovich Ukrainians rallied in Kiev. Nevertheless, thousands of occupiers remained in the anti-Yanukovich Maidan over the next week.

Several thousand occupiers were still in the Maidan when, early in the morning of 30 November, police arrived at the Square to disperse them violently. Police, claiming that protesters threw debris at them, beat 36 people with clubs and arrested 35 demonstrators. Videos of the police attack spread online and throughout the press.

In response, several members of parliament as well as President Yanukovich's own chief of staff resigned. The U.S. denounced the police violence. On 1 December more than 300,000 marched through Kiev. One group of protestors attempted to use a bulldozer to break police lines protecting the Presidential headquarters. Police fired stun grenades at the bulldozer. The mass march, however, remained largely peaceful.

Opposition parties acted as well. The Fatherland Party announced that a no-confidence motion in the President was submitted to Parliament. The nationalist party Svoboda broke into Kiev's City Hall and declared an occupation and new "people's administration."

The next day thousands of protestors began occupations in trade union buildings near City Hall. President Yanukovich declared calls for resignation premature because elections were already scheduled for 2015. He said he wanted to re-open discussions with the European Union (EU). The Parliament's speaker called for "round-table talks" to end the unrest.

With cries from many to stop the violence, the government's Interior Minister announced a ban on the use of force against peaceful demonstrators. Three days later, 6 December, 1000 pro-government Ukrainians marched in Kiev to support Yanukovich.

On 8 December roughly 800,000 Ukrainians rallied at the Maidan demanding the government's resignation. They toppled a statue of Lenin and blockaded streets. Instead of attacking the protestors, the police formed a protective ring around a pro-government demonstration of several thousand near Parliament. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon urged Yanukovich to respond to demonstrators' demands.

Early the morning of 11 December, thousands of riot police blockaded Kiev and stormed the Maidan. Demonstrators chanted "Peaceful protest!" Some protestors with makeshift weapons gathered outside the trade union buildings, now referred to as the headquarters of the National Resistance by the opposition leaders. The police cleared off a significant part of the Maidan. Hours later the police withdrew and protestors began to rebuild the barriers around the Maidan.

Two days later, on 13 December, President Yanukovich convened a meeting with opposition leaders. He urged the protestors to end their demonstrations and offered amnesty to imprisoned protestors and a moratorium on the use of force by security forces.

The same day, Rinat Akhmetov, reportedly Ukraine's richest man and usually an ally of Yanukovich with extensive influence in Parliament, announced support for the mass demonstrations.

On the next day tens of thousands turned out in Kiev for a pro-Yanukovich rally. The day after that, 15 December, between 150,000 and 300,000 Ukrainians converged at the Maidan to oppose Yanukovich.

Parliament overwhelmingly passed a law on the 20th, introduced by Yanukovich's own Party of Regions, granting amnesty to anyone detained or charged in the protests. Tensions flared when a protest organizer in Kharkiv was stabbed and an anti-government journalist assaulted.

POST-CHRISTMAS INTENSIFICATION OF THE STRUGGLE

On 12 January, two days after police assaulted during a demonstration a former official of Tymoshenko's administration, 50,000 Ukrainians rallied at the Maidan to denounce that act of violence.

On 16 January, the Ukrainian Parliament passed anti-protest legislation prohibiting the installation of unauthorized tents in public spaces and banning protestors from wearing balaclavas to protests. The U.S State

Department condemned the laws as violations of freedom of speech and press.

Three days later, on 19 January, thousands of Ukrainians rallied at the Maidan to protest the new legislation. A battalion of riot police blockaded the road to Parliament. A group of demonstrators attacked the police with firecrackers and threw large cobblestones and firebombs at the police, who retaliated with a water cannon. More than a hundred people, including 70 police officers, were injured in the clashes. Yatsenyuk asked protesters to refrain from violence.

The next day, 20 January, some protestors set up a catapult that launched cobblestones into police ranks. Riot police injured at least four protesters with rubber bullets. Police came back on the day following, pushing past barricades made of burned buses and fighting with a crowd of protesters wielding sticks. The police, using plastic bullets and stun grenades, advanced towards the Maidan and dismantled the catapult used the previous day.

A group of campaigners rounded up a dozen people who appeared to be demonstrators but who were perpetrating violence and detained them in an occupied trade union building. The violent demonstrators were questioned. Several confessed to being promised \$25 in exchange for causing trouble. It was unclear who hired them.

On 22 January, President Yanukovich met with the three major opposition leaders – Tyahniboh, Klitschko, and Yatsenyuk – at the presidential headquarters to negotiate. Outside, protesters fought violently with police. Police shot and killed two protesters. Later, a man fell to his death while attempting to throw stones at police from an archway. Throughout the day, protesters broke apart the plaza at Independence Square to gather cobblestones to throw.

The militant nationalists at the Maidan using violence reportedly dampened the broader participation in the encampment, particularly among women. The Russian government also used the violence to brand the entire Maidan revolution as a violent coup led by Ukrainian “extremists” and “fascists.”

Reports from inside Yanukovich’s government suggest that its ability to escalate violent repression was hampered not by street-fighting but by the refusals to further crack down already underway within his own army, among rank-and-file as well as higher officers. Brigades at some locations remained in their barracks rather than be positioned for repression.

Some campaigners were also pro-active in nonviolently reducing the threat from the army. One brigade of 500 troops sent from Dnipropetrovsk by train to join the soldiers in Kiev was stopped by a group of nonviolent activists lying across the railroad ties. Activists also stopped reinforcements by blocking buses loaded with troops.

The opposition leaders said their meeting with President Yanukovich ended with no resolution. Klitschko threatened to join the street protests if Yanukovich did not make concessions within 24 hours, saying: “If the president won’t listen to us, we will go into attack. There is no other way.”

PEOPLE TAKE ACTION BEYOND KIEV

The following day, 23 January, people in cities beyond Kiev joined the campaign more boldly. Protesters in Lviv occupied their regional administration building. Demonstrators in Rivne demanded that riot police officers deployed to Kiev return home. Thousands of protesters in Cherkasy clashed with the police protecting the municipal administration building.

Later that same day, Yatsenyuk, Klitschko, Tyagnibok, and Yanukovych announced a tentative agreement after a second round of negotiations: Yanukovych would free dozens of detained protesters, Parliament would revisit the anti-protest legislation next week, police would not fire on protesters with live ammunition, and the opposition leaders would maintain a ceasefire and condemn violence used by civilians against police.

Protesters at the Maidan voiced their dismay at this agreement which failed to include Yanukovych's resignation.

The next day, 24 January, citizens held mass demonstrations in nine cities beyond Kiev.

The Interior Ministry announced that it had deployed between 3,000 and 4,000 specially trained police officers and 8,500 Interior Ministry troops to contain the unrest across the country.

By the next day mass actions had spread to three additional cities in the form of an occupation, blockade, and mass rally. President Yanukovych made a new offer: to install opposition leaders as prime minister and vice prime minister of humanitarian affairs in a new administration. He offered to repeal the constitutional changes that had increased his presidential powers. He also reiterated his promise to grant amnesty and amend the anti-protest legislation.

Some protesters, expressing a general skepticism of all politicians, said that if opposition leader Yatsenyuk accepted the offer from the President, Yatsenyuk would betray the cause. Yatsenyuk rejected the offer for a new administration but said negotiations would continue.

The next day, 26 January, anti-government demonstrations spread further into previously pro-Yanukovych southern and eastern Ukraine: 1,500 citizens rallied outside the regional administration in Dnepropetrovsk; 5,000 rallied in Zaporizhzhya; and 2,000 marched in Odessa.

A CYCLE OF NEGOTIATIONS, CONCESSIONS, ESCALATIONS ON BOTH SIDES

On 28 January, hours before Parliament gathered for a vote of no confidence on Prime Minister Azarov, Azarov announced his resignation. Afterwards, parliament revoked nine of the twelve laws restricting free speech and assembly passed on 16 January.

Clashes between police and demonstrators dissipated in Kiev. The press reported that multiple militant nationalist factions independent of any political party had splintered within the movement. Negotiations between opposition leaders and Yanukovych continued.

On 29 January, Parliament passed a bill offering amnesty to jailed demonstrators only after the opposition ended the occupation of administrative buildings. Police force would be used to retake the occupied buildings if protesters failed to end their occupations within 15 days.

On 31 January President Yanukovych signed the amnesty bill and repeal of anti-protest legislation into law. On the same day Euromaidan SOS, a group that had been tracking the number of missing and kidnapped protesters, announced that 27 protesters still remained unaccounted for.

Property destruction – and violence -- continued to be committed on the edges of the campaign. A militant nationalist group called Red Sector took responsibility for burning cars in Kiev. Members of the Defense of the Maidan captured and assaulted a plainclothes police officer inside an occupied building.

On 2 February, tens of thousands of demonstrators rallied at the Maidan. Opposition leaders said they would

refuse any agreement with Yanukovich that did not involve a total transfer of power. Occupiers erected wooden crosses to honor martyrs.

By mid-February, Lviv's mayor reported that he had lost control over his city because the occupation of the regional administration had barred his government from operating for three weeks. Opposition leaders agreed, in a controversial move, to end the occupation of Lviv's administration building and Kiev's City Hall in return for Yanukovich granting full amnesty to detained protesters. Yanukovich agreed, and authorities immediately released 234 jailed protesters under the amnesty law despite some activists' skepticism.

Tens of thousands of protesters gathered in the Maidan on 16 February to again demand Yanukovich's resignation.

Two days later, 18 February, the violence came to a crescendo. Parliament failed to approve changes to the Constitution that would limit Presidential power. Some demonstrators fought with police. Security forces then shut down public transportation in Kiev, advanced on the Maidan in armored vehicles, and attempted to clear out the occupation using water cannons, live and rubber ammunition and tear gas.

Demonstrators attacked the vehicles with fireworks and rocks. Occupiers set the circumference of the occupation on fire to deter further encroachment. When police attempted to run through the barricade of fire, however, protest leaders intervened to ensure the officers received medical treatment. Twenty-five people, including nine police officers, were killed. Hundreds more were wounded, from both sides.

The next day, 19 February, thousands of protesters flocked to Independence Square and the riot police increased their numbers. The United States imposed a visa ban on twenty top Ukrainian officials as a response to the lethal violence used on 18 February.

Ukrainian authorities announced on the 19th they were implementing what they called a nationwide antiterrorist operation to ensure that guns did not fall into the hands of the extremist groups. Videos showed pro-government demonstrators, wielding baseball bats and "Stop Maidan" signs, attacking opposition protesters and journalists.

Anti-Yanukovich forces escalated on the 19th. In the cities of Uzhgorod, Lutsk, Khmelnytsky, and Poltava protesters took over police stations and administrative buildings. In Lviv, security forces surrendered to protesters after they set barracks on fire, seized a major military compound, and reoccupied the regional administration building. With anti-Yanukovich forces now virtually in control of Lviv, opposition leaders began to recruit up to six hundred anti-government protesters a day to depart for Kiev and join the Maidan.

By the end of the day of 19 February, governmental authorities said they suspended the "antiterrorist operation." They declared a truce with the opposition leaders. On the 20th, less than half a day later, police broke the truce and opened fire on antigovernment protesters in Kiev, killing 77 Ukrainians and injuring more than a thousand.

Maidan occupiers retaliated against the police barricades and retook control of nearby streets. Militant nationalist coalitions of armed antigovernment groups, including the Maidan Self Defense Organization, the Right Sector Coalition, and the armed wing of the nationalist Svoboda party led the retaliatory efforts against the police. Maidan occupiers noted that at least 32 militant nationalist militias existed within the opposition movement at this time, with more appearing each day.

THE END GAME

On 20 February opposition leaders and former allies of Yanukovich convened a session of Parliament to

negotiate a peace deal. To protest police violence, 12 members of Yanukovych's party and the mayor of Kiev resigned.

The following day, 21 February, Parliament passed a peace agreement signed by President Yanukovych and all three opposition leaders that: ordered the withdrawal of troops and banned the use of lethal force; stated that only Parliament could declare a state of emergency; mandated early Presidential elections after the reinstatement of the 2004 Constitution; and declared that antigovernment forces must forfeit any weapons and relinquish control over public buildings.

Parliament then passed a series of resolutions to implement and expand the peace deal, including blanket amnesty for antigovernment protesters and a bill to free former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko from prison.

Later a column of 40 policemen from Lviv arrived in Kiev to declare their defection from the government and their intent to protect the demonstrators.

All security forces had withdrawn from Independence Square by the afternoon.

At the Maidan many activists, including members of Right Sector and Automaidan, denounced the deal as an unacceptable compromise and continued to demand Yanukovych's resignation. As the opposition leaders spoke, demonstrators held an open casket procession for protesters who had died in the previous days, marching forward to lay the coffins on the stage.

Leaders of two militant nationalist groups interrupted the speeches, blamed the opposition leaders' for failing to oust Yanukovych and vowed to lead an armed attack.

Late that evening, President Yanukovych fled the capital.

The next morning, 22 February, given the continued absence of riot police, occupiers of the Maidan declared themselves the head of security for Kiev. The presidential administration building near Independence Square remained empty. Protesters carrying makeshift weapons seized Yanukovych's palace near Kiev and opened it to the public.

In the afternoon President Yanukovych spoke on television from eastern Ukraine, stating that a "coup" had driven him from the capital but he had no plan to resign. Few major institutions in Ukraine still remained under the control of Yanukovych's administration.

Parliament acted the following day, the 23rd, making Oleksandr Turchynov the new president pending an election, and ousting remaining members of Yanukovych's cabinet. Members of Yanukovych's own party issued a statement strongly denouncing the now-deposed President's use of deadly force against protesters. The military declared support for the new government.

Pro-Yanukovych demonstrators held rallies in several eastern cities.

On 24 February, Ukraine's acting government declared ex-President Viktor Yanukovych a fugitive on charges of mass murder. The dictator had been deposed and replaced.

Research Notes

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Additional Notes:

In the last weeks of revolution, it became clear that militant nationalist groups like Right Sector were leading the violent retaliations against the security forces. However it is difficult to pinpoint when exactly these groups entered the revolution and when they became the primary groups deploying retaliatory violence.

It is possible that Right Sector and many of the other militant nationalist groups were the driving forces behind the movement's use of violence in the mid-January clashes. It is also possible that those early clashes spurred the creation of these militant nationalist groups which only later began to deliberately organize the retaliatory violence.

As further research on the revolutionary movement is published, these details and questions may be answered.

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Guido Girgenti, 21/04/2014

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