

# Government 3001: Approaches to Politics

Daniel Carpenter

Freed Professor of Government

[dcarpenter@gov.harvard.edu](mailto:dcarpenter@gov.harvard.edu)

Office Hours: 9AM-noon, Wednesdays, Knafel 430

Course Assistant: Bernardo Zacka

[bzacka@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:bzacka@fas.harvard.edu)

Meetings: Thursdays, 2-4 PM, Knafel 050

## Course Description

This course functions as an introduction to political science research across the subfields of the discipline as represented by Harvard. Our discipline is a vast one and incredibly varied; it is difficult to think of another academic discipline (at least in the social sciences, as well as beyond) in which so many different methods and approaches are employed. There are people who, in other lives, would be called philosophers, economists, historians, statisticians, psychologists, ethnographers, regional specialists, sociologists, and so on. Hence a one-semester, time-bound introduction to inquiry and research in political science must be focused.

To focus our efforts, we will examine the intersection of **democratic politics and the state**, or “power and democracy.” We will examine theoretical reflections on power and its meaning and measurement, and upon democracy and its meaning and measurement. We will examine various empirical instantiations of democracy and power (or policy) – democratic politics and human rights treaties, democratic politics and economic growth, democratic politics and government expenditures, democratic politics and government regulation. In covering this thematic turf, we will examine the following three dimensions of modern political science research.

1. **Theoretical Concepts.** There are dozens of different courses that one could take to learn “theory” in political science, ranging from political theory courses proper, to comparative politics and institutions courses, to courses in decision theory and game theory, and even courses on networks and political psychology. This course will function as a partial conceptual introduction to a number of the terms you are likely to hear over the next 4 or more years in graduate school. Concepts from political theory on democracy and power will be central to our investigation, and we will begin with them. We will then turn to concepts used to understand or measure empirical politics (electoral competition, incumbency advantage, capture or rent-seeking), and we will supplement this discussion over the course of the semester with concepts commonly used in rational choice analyses of politics (costly signaling, principal-agent problems

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[including adverse selection and moral hazard concepts], commitment problems, and the like). We will also examine theoretical concepts used in comparative and historical inquiry (state autonomy, policy feedback, civic engagement) and international relations (realism versus liberalism versus constructivism, commitment, etc.).

2. **Methods.** In addition to theoretical concepts, there are various methods used to study empirical politics, and we will examine some of these in our reading as well. These range from experimental approaches to deliberation, to observational approaches to elections and competition [including differences-in-differences estimators and regression discontinuity designs], historical approaches to civic engagement [including archival research, narratives and causal process tracing, and temporal comparisons], formal and quantitative approaches to the economic consequences of democracy [including instrumental variables approaches], and quantitative and case-study approaches to human rights policy.

Let me be clear that **this course will not function as a methods course**, and that there are excellent methods courses taught in the Department (Gov 2009, taught by Professor Peter Hall, and Gov 2010, taught by Professor Michael Hiscox), as well as particular qualitative and quantitative methods sequences available within the Department and elsewhere. This is an introduction to political science research, where different methods are surveyed but not systematically investigated. All written assignments will be conceptual in form, and I will usually ask you to apply a concept or method (understood conceptually) to a particular thematic problem.

3. **Research Agendas.** In your career as a scholar, you will be judged not simply by the individual products you produce but by the way they are connected. You will also be judged by whether you have established something of an identity or 'brand,' namely what intellectual contributions you have made. You will undoubtedly be judged on other dimensions as well (whether your work is interesting, whether your methods of inquiry are sufficiently rigorous (however rigor is defined), and what impact your research has had upon others). When scholars in our Department visit the course, or when we read a set of papers from a scholar (like Diana Mutz), I want you to think about how a series of papers or a book add up to more than the individual chapters or articles themselves, and how scholars are able to take a multifaceted attack upon a problem or theme.

There is, in any course such as this, an inevitable tradeoff between cogency and comprehensiveness. There is much left out of this course, for instance a discussion of republicanism versus liberalism versus social democracy in political theory. There is little mathematical development of either statistical estimators or formal theoretic concepts (though I might be able to go over some of this in "breakout sessions" from time to time). There is very little if anything on the politics of China, Eastern Europe, the Middle East or Latin America. Canadian specialists will be similarly disappointed except for a brief visit to British Columbia (which, by the way, has excellent fishing in addition to some interesting deliberative institutions). None of our visitors is a full-time practitioner of experimental methods. And there is an

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immense literature on race, ethnicity and gender in politics that we will visit only tangentially. I have not even begun to touch on the omissions from a course like this. For circumspection's sake alone, you should be aware of them at the outset and throughout.

## Readings

By design, there is an intensive reading and assignment load for this course. The following books are available for purchase at the Harvard Coop, and of course you may avail yourselves of Internet-based sellers or independent bookstores (such as Harvard Bookstore) as well for these volumes. In addition to these books, a packet of reading (selections from non-purchased books, or chapters from edited volumes of compendia) will be made available, and there will be many electronic articles and papers assigned. See below for the particular list of weekly reading assignments.

Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Ansolabehere and Snyder, *The End of Inequality: One Person, One Vote and the Transformation of American Democracy* (W.W. Norton, 2008).

Larry Bartels, *Unequal Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

Carpenter, *Reputation and Power: Organizational image and Pharmaceutical Regulation at the FDA* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

Simmons, *Mobilizing for Human Rights* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006).

Tuck, *Free Riding* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

## Assignments

The course can be interpreted as having six different modules. For each of these modules, there will be a 4-5 page paper required of you. In each paper, you will elaborate a response to a particular question or questions that are chosen and released beforehand. In some questions I will ask you to apply an "approach" (a concept or method of thinking) to a new problem – such as how deliberative democracy might be designed to shape decisions in a technical field like health or environmental policy; whether a particular institution satisfies the demands of deliberative democracy or electoral competition; whether

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a particular institution (professional diplomats) might be interpreted or modeled as a principal-agent problem, and how to test such a model; how an experiment or historical study might be designed to measure social pressure or network influences in civic engagement. In other cases, sometimes along with the kind of application just discussed, I will ask for a critique of some concept or method of thinking as represented in a paper or book.

Hence the assignments in this course are continual, episodic and there is no final research product. There is no research paper in which you will apply a particular statistical estimator, nor an empirical exercise where you are asked to gather data or conduct archival or interview research, nor a problem set where you are asked to prove some mathematical result. **All of these assignments must be completed punctually in order for you to pass this course, and there will be no incomplete grades for this course.**

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

### Module One: Introduction: Democracy, Power and Method

Concepts: power and its faces; evidence for power; measurement of power; ethnography and narrative as approaches; countability of politics and power outcomes; internal versus external validity and generalization; historical contingency as a form of external validity; social/economic/health consequences of politics and exercise of power; redistribution versus regulation; taxation versus regulation.

#### Thursday, September 9<sup>th</sup> – CLASS INTRODUCTION: Democracy and Power in Political Analysis

Bachrach and Baratz, "The Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review* 56 (4) (December 1962) 947-52. [E]

S. Lukes – *Power: A Radical View*, Introduction and Chapter 1.

Gaventa, *Power and Powerlessness: Quiescence and Rebellion in an Appalachian Valley* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), Chapter 1, Chapter 4 [skim]. [P]

Cameron, *Veto Bargaining: Presidents and the Politics of Negative Power* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000) [P] Chapters 3, 4, 6 and 8.

Moe, "Power and Political Institutions," *Perspectives on Politics*, 3 (2) (June 2005) 215-233 [E]

Ziblatt, "Of Course Generalize, But How? Returning to Middle Range Theory in Comparative Politics," (Forum on Middle Range Theory) *American Political Science Association-Comparative Politics Newsletter*, Vol. 17, No. 2. [E]

Evan S. Lieberman, E. S. (2001). "Causal Inference in Historical Institutional Analysis: A Specification of Periodization Strategies." *Comparative Political Studies* 34( 9) (2001): 1011-1035.

Robert Adcock and David Collier, "Measurement Validity: Toward a Shared Framework for Qualitative and Quantitative Research," *American Political Science Review* 95 (3) (September 2001).

#### Additional Reading (not required):

Billingsley, *Probability and Measure*, small selection. [P]

#### Sunday, September 12<sup>th</sup> – The Power of the Democratic State and Approaches Towards Its Study

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Jacob Hacker, "The Historical Logic of National Health Insurance: Structure and Sequence in the Development of British, Canadian, and U.S. Medical Policy," *Studies in American Political Development* (1998). [E]

Pierson, "Not Just What, but *When*: Timing and Sequence in Political Processes," *Studies in American Political Development* 14 (2000):1:72-92 [E]

Bartels, *Unequal Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) [B]

Crowley, Jocelyn Elise, Margaret Watson, and Maureen Waller. "Understanding 'Power Talk:' Language, Public Policy, and Democracy," *Perspectives on Politics* 6(1) (2008): 71-88. [E]

Philipp Rehm, "Social Policy by Popular Demand," *World Politics* (2010), forthcoming. [E]

Carpenter and Sin, "Crisis and Economic Regulation: The Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act of 1938," *Studies in American Political Development* (2007). [E]

Carpenter, *Reputation and Power: Organizational image and Pharmaceutical Regulation at the FDA*, Introduction, Chapters 3-5, 7, 10-11 [B]

Sanford Gordon and Gregory Huber, "Accountability and Coercion: Is Justice Blind when It Runs for Office?" *American Journal of Political Science* (2004) [E]

Additional Readings (not required):

Iversen and Soskice, "Real Exchange Rates and Competitiveness: The Political Economy of Skill Formation, Wage Compression, and Electoral Systems," *American Political Science Review* (2010) [E].

Hacker, *The Divided Welfare State* (Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Carpenter, "Groups, the Media, Agency Waiting Costs and FDA Drug Approval," *American Journal of Political Science* 46 (3) (July 2002) 490-505. [E]

Carpenter, "Protection without Capture: Product Approval by a Politically Responsive, Learning Regulator," *American Political Science Review* 98 (4) (November 2004), 613-631. [E]

<p>First Paper due Tuesday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, 9PM, by deposit at course website.</p>
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## Module Two: Democracy and Deliberation

Concepts and Methods: deliberation, deliberative democracy, reasonability. Representation and its ethics. Deliberative polls, deliberative experiments; the political consequences and ethical implications of emotion; cross-cutting political exposure/discourse; laboratory experiments, including with bio-feedback.

### Thursday, September 16<sup>th</sup> – Normative and Experimental Approaches to Democracy and Deliberation [visitor: Dennis Thompson]

Gutmann and Thompson, *Why Deliberative Democracy?* Princeton University Press, 2004  
[selections assigned] [B]

Thompson, "Who Should Govern Who Governs? The Role of Citizens in Reforming the Electoral System," in *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly*, eds. M. E. Warren and H. Pearse (Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 20-49. [P]

Beerbohm, "The Dilemma of Democratic Representation," *Revise/Resubmit, American Political Science Review* [E]

Thompson, "Deliberative Democratic Theory and Empirical Political Science," *Annual Review of Political Science*, vol. 11 (2008), pp. 497-520. [E]

Diana Mutz, "The Consequences of Cross-Cutting Networks for Political Participation," *American Journal of Political Science* 46 (4) (October 2002): 838–855. [E]

Diana Mutz and Byron Reeves, "The New Videomalaise: Effects of Televised Incivility on Political Trust," *American Political Science Review* (2005) [E].

#### Additional Readings (not required for discussion but may be drawn upon for assignment):

Beerbohm, "Is Deliberative Democracy Supererogatory?" Under Review, *Ethics* [E]

Excerpts from Thompson, *Just Elections: Creating a Fair Electoral Process in the U.S.*, University of Chicago Press, 2002. [P]

Mutz, "The Workplace as a Context for Cross-Cutting Political Discourse," *Journal of Politics* 68 (1) (February 2006): 140–155. [E]

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**Thursday September 23<sup>rd</sup> – Normative and Experimental Approaches to Democracy and Deliberation**  
**[visitor: Eric Beerbohm]**

Jeremy Waldron, *Law and Disagreement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999) Chapter 11  
("Participation: The Right of Rights"). [P]

David Estlund, *Democratic Authority* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008) Chapter XIV:  
Utopophobia. [P]

Richard Tuck, "Voting," and Chapter 1 (Prisoners' Dilemma) in *Free Riding* [B].

Beerbohm, *In Our Name: The Ethics of Representative Democracy*, forthcoming Princeton  
University Press. [E, provided by author]

- Table of Contents
- Chapter 1, "Auditing Democracy"
- Chapter 2, "Paper Stones: The Ethics of Participation"
- Chapter 9, "Democratic Complicity"

Second Paper [for Modules Two and Three] due Monday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 9PM, by deposit at course website.

## Module Three: Elections and Representation

Concepts and Methods: representation (principal-agent approach, identity/demographic approach; trustee concept); electoral competition; “free, just and fair” elections and how to measure their attainment; incumbency advantage and its consequences; instrumental variables approaches; regression discontinuity design (RDD); historical analysis of institutional change in electoral rules.

### Thursday, September 30<sup>th</sup> – Elections and Representation [visitors: Steve Ansolabehere and Jim Snyder]

Ansolabehere and Snyder, *The End of Inequality: One Person, One Vote and the Transformation of American Democracy* (W.W. Norton, 2008).

Ansolabehere, Gerber and Snyder, “Equal Votes, Equal Money,” *American Political Science Review* 2002. [E]

Ansolabehere, Snyder and Stewart. “Old Voters, New Voters, and the Personal Vote: Using Redistricting to Measure the Incumbency Advantage,” *American Journal of Political Science* 44 (1) (2000) 17-34.

Snyder and Ting, “An Informational Rationale for Political Parties,” *American Journal of Political Science* 2002 [E].

#### Additional Readings (not required):

John Aldrich, *Why Parties? The Origins and Transformation of Political Parties in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press).

### Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup> – Elections and Representation – Electoral Competition and Fairness

Ansolabehere, Hansen, Hirano and Snyder, “More Democracy,” *Studies in American Political Development*, October 2010. [E]

Thompson, “The Primary Purpose of Presidential Primaries,” *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 125 (Summer 2010), pp. 205-32 [E]

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Snyder and Ting, "An Informational Rationale for Political Parties," *American Journal of Political Science* 2002 [E].

Ziblatt, "Shaping Democratic Practice and the Causes of Electoral Fraud: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Germany" *American Political Science Review* 103 (1) (2008): 1-21. [E]

Lee, Moretti and Butler, "Do Voters Effect or Elect Policies? Evidence from the U.S. House," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 119(3) (2004): 807-860. [E]

Andrew C. Eggers and Jens Hainmueller, "MPs for Sale? Returns to Office in Postwar British Politics," *American Political Science Review* 103(4) (December 2009): 513-533. [E]

[skim] Justin Grimmer, Eitan Hersh, Brian Feinstein and Daniel Carpenter. "Are Close Elections Randomly Determined?" Manuscript, Harvard Department of Government, September 2010. [E]

Additional Readings (not required):

Richard Bessel, *The American Ballot Box in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

Lee, "Randomized Experiments from Non-Random Selection in U.S. House Elections," *Journal of Econometrics* 142 (2007): 675-697. [See also related McCrary paper, *Journal of Econometrics*.] [E]

## Module Four: Civic Engagement and Democracy

Concepts and Methods: The difference between civic engagement and participation; the centrality of organizational context and organization building; “social capital” and whether capital-based concepts are helpful for political analysis; electoral versus non-electoral participation; state-society relations and policy feedback for participation; field experiments and turnout; long-term temporal comparisons of civic organizations and engagement.

### Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup> – Civic Engagement and Its Political Analysis [reading]

Putnam, “Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital,” *Journal of Democracy* 6(1) (1995): 65-78.

Andrea Campbell, “Self-Interest, Social Security, and the Distinctive Participation Patterns of Senior Citizens,” *American Political Science Review* 96 (September 2002): 565-74. [E]

Nancy Burns, Kay Lehman Scholzman, and Sidney Verba, “Public Consequences of Private Inequality: Family Life and Citizen Participation,” *American Political Science Review* 91 (2) (June 1997). [E]

Gerber, Green and Larimer, “Social Pressure and Voter Turnout: Evidence from a Large-Scale Field Experiment,” *American Political Science Review* 102 (1) (February 2008): 33-48. [E]

Mettler and Milstein, “American Political Development from Citizens’ Perspective: Tracking Federal Government’s Presence in Individual Lives over Time,” *Studies in American Political Development*, 21 (1) (2007): 110-30.

Tuck, *Free Riding*, Chapters 3-5.

Sheri Berman, “Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic,” *World Politics* 49 (3) (April 1997): 401-429 [E]

### Thursday, October 21<sup>st</sup> – Civic Engagement and Its Political Analysis [visitor: Theda Skocpol]

Skocpol, *From Membership to Management* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press). [B]

Skocpol, et al., “A Nation of Organizers: The Institutional Origins of Civic Voluntarism in the United States,” *American Political Science Review* 94 (3) (September 2000). [E]

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Jocelyn Elise Crowley and Theda Skocpol. "The Rush to Organize: Explaining Associational Formation in the United States, 1860s-1920s." *American Journal of Political Science* 45(4) (2001):813-829. [E]

Skocpol, Rachael Cobb and Casey Klofstad, "Disconnection and Reorganization: The Transformation of Civic Life in Late 20th Century America," *Studies in American Political Development* 19 (Fall 2005): 137-56. [E]

Suzanne Mettler, "Bringing the State Back In to Civic Engagement: Policy Feedback Effects of the G.I. Bill for World War II Veterans," *American Political Science Review* 96 (2) (June 2002): 351-365. [E]

Mettler, "'The Only Good Thing Was the G.I. Bill': Program Effects on African American Veterans' Political Participation," *Studies in American Political Development*, 19 (Spring 2005): 31-52.

Paper for Module Four Due Friday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, 9PM, by deposit at course website.

## Module Five: Domestic Politics, International Politics and Human Rights

Concepts and Methods: Commitment problems; signaling and signal-based theories of international action; rational expression versus non-rational expression; promises and limits of cross-country analysis; what is countable across nations and geographies and what is not?

### Thursday, October 28<sup>th</sup> – Domestic Politics and International Politics

John Owen, "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace," *International Security* 19:2 (Fall 1994), 87-125. [E]

RAND Corporation, "The Democratic Peace Idea," Online Appendix at [http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph\\_reports/MR1346/MR1346.appc.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/MR1346/MR1346.appc.pdf) [E].

Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, James D. Morrow, Randolph M. Siverson, and Alastair Smith, "An Institutional Explanation of the Democratic Peace," *American Political Science Review*, 93:4 (December 1999), 791–807 [E].

Michael W. Doyle, "Liberalism and World Politics," *American Political Science Review*, 80:4 (December 1996): 1151–1169. [E]

Joanne Gowa, "Democratic States and International Disputes," *International Organization*, 49:3 (Summer 1995): 511–522. [E]

**Thursday, November 4<sup>th</sup> – Domestic Politics and Human Rights [visitor: Beth Simmons]**

Simmons, *Mobilizing for Human Rights* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). [E]

Paper for Module Five due Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 9PM, by deposit at course website.

**Module Six: Democracy, Identity and Growth**

Concepts: economic growth, commitment problem and state confiscation, growth and democracy; which institutions foster democracy and growth, and why; problem of endogeneity; instrumental variables approaches; promises and limits to cross-country analysis.

**Thursday, November 11<sup>th</sup> -- Democracy and Economic Outcomes**

Ziblatt, "Of Course Generalize, But How? Returning to Middle Range Theory in Comparative Politics," (Forum on Middle Range Theory) *American Political Science Association-Comparative Politics Newsletter*, Vol. 17, No. 2. [E]

Przeworski, et al, *Democracy and Development*, Chapters 1 and 2. [P]

Lily Tsai, "Solidary Groups, Informal Accountability, and Local Public Goods Provision in Rural China," *American Political Science Review*, 101 (2) (May 2007): 355-372. [E]

Evan Lieberman, "Ethnic Politics, Risk, and Policy-Making: A Cross-National Statistical Analysis of Government Responses to HIV/AIDS," *Comparative Political Studies*, (v40n12), 1420-37. [E]

Lieberman and Varun Gauri, "Boundary Politics and HIV/AIDS Policy in Brazil and South Africa," *Studies in Comparative International Development* (Winter v41n3, 2006). [E]

Lieberman, "Nested Analysis as a Mixed-Method Strategy for Comparative Research," *American Political Science Review* (August 2005), 99, 3: 435-52. [E]

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Ziblatt, "Why Some Cities Provide More Public Goods Than Others: A Subnational Comparison of German Cities in 1912," *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 43 (2008) 3/4. [E]

**Thursday, November 18<sup>th</sup> – Democracy and Growth [visitor: Jim Robinson]**

Robinson, "Economic Development and Democracy" *Annual Review of Political Science* 9 (2006): 503-27. [E]

Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (New York: Cambridge University Press). [B]

Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson and Yared, "Income and Democracy," *AER* (2008). [E]

Acemoglu, Robinson, Querubin, "Economic and Political Inequality in Development: The Case of Cundinamarca, Colombia." [E]

Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson. "The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation," *American Economic Review* 91(5) (2001): 1369-1401. [E]

Acemoglu, Johnson and Robinson, "Institutions as the Fundamental Cause of Long-Run Economic Growth," in Aghion and Durlauf, *Handbook of Economic Growth* [preprint available at <http://elsa.berkeley.edu/~chad/handbook9sj.pdf>] [E or P]

**Thursday, November 25<sup>th</sup> – GIVE THANKS**

**Thursday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> – Ethnic Identity in a Democratic State [visitor: Prerna Singh]**

Singh, book manuscript, *Subnationalism and Social Development: A Comparative Analysis of Indian States* [selections, E]

Singh, "'Wellness and Welfare: A Longitudinal Analysis of Social Development in Kerala, India'," *World Development*, 2010. [E]

*Singh and Lieberman*, "Institutionalized Ethnicity: The Development of a Concept and a Measure" [E]

Patrick Heller, "Degrees of Democracy: Some Comparative Lessons from India," *World Politics*, 52:4 (July 2000): 484–519. [E]

Paper for Module Six Due Monday, December 6, 9PM, by deposit at course website.
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