DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS TOOLS IN THE STUDY OF HISTORY: CASE "THE INFLUENCE OF MEDIATIZATION ON THE FORMATION OF HISTORICAL MEMORY AMONG STUDENTS WHO VISITED EXHIBITIONS DEDICATED TO THE SECOND WORLD WAR"

DESENVOLVIMENTO DE FERRAMENTAS DO PROCESSO EDUCACIONAL NO ESTUDO DA HISTÓRIA: CASO "A INFLUÊNCIA DA MIDIATIZAÇÃO NA FORMAÇÃO DA MEMÓRIA HISTÓRICA ENTRE ALUNOS QUE VISITARAM EXPOSIÇÕES DEDICADAS À SEGUNDA GUERRA MUNDIAL"

DESARROLLO DE HERRAMIENTAS EDUCATIVAS EN EL ESTUDIO DE LA HISTORIA: CASO "LA INFLUENCIA DE LA MEDIATIZACIÓN EN LA FORMACIÓN DE LA MEMORIA HISTÓRICA EN ESTUDIANTES QUE VISITARON EXPOSICIONES DEDICADAS A LA SEGUNDA GUERRA MUNDIAL"

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates how mediated representations of history influence students' historical memory in educational settings. Based on students' visit to the exhibition Hero City Leningrad in Saint Petersburg, the research used focus groups, intent analysis, and content analysis of written reflections. Findings show that the exhibition fostered emotional engagement and prompted students to critically reflect on how media shape historical understanding. Three main themes emerged: spatial-temporal perceptions of memory, the role of media channels, and reinterpretations of the past in light of current values. The study concludes that mediated educational experiences can strengthen historical thinking and identity formation among students.

KEYWORDS: Media. Topos of Media Space-Time. Locus of Media Space-Time. Values. Media Memory.

RESUMO: Este estudo investiga como as representações mediáticas da história influenciam a memória histórica dos estudantes no contexto educacional. A pesquisa baseia-se na visita de alunos à exposição Cidade Heróica Leningrado, em São Petersburgo, utilizando grupos focais, análise de intenção e análise de conteúdo. Os resultados mostram que a exposição despertou envolvimento emocional e reflexão crítica sobre a influência dos meios de comunicação na compreensão do passado. Três eixos principais emergiram: percepção espaço-temporal da memória, papel dos canais midiáticos e releitura dos eventos históricos. Conclui-se que experiências educativas mediadas fortalecem o pensamento histórico e a formação da identidade dos estudantes.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Mídia. Topos do espaço-tempo midiático. Lócus do espaço-tempo midiático. Valores. Memória midiática.

RESUMEN: Este estudio analiza cómo las representaciones mediáticas de la historia influyen en la memoria histórica de los estudiantes en contextos educativos. Basado en una visita estudiantil a la exposición Ciudad Héroe Leningrado en San Petersburgo, se utilizaron grupos focales, análisis de intención y análisis de contenido. Los resultados muestran que la exposición generó una fuerte implicación emocional y reflexión crítica sobre el papel de los medios en la comprensión histórica. Se identificaron tres temas clave: percepción espacio-temporal de la memoria, canales mediáticos y reinterpretaciones del pasado. La experiencia educativa mediada fortaleció el pensamiento histórico y la identidad estudiantil.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Medios de comunicación. Topos del espacio-tiempo mediático. Locus del espacio-tiempo mediático. Valores. Memoria mediática.

Introduction

The flow of time toward the future and the movement of events into the past is an objective process occurring within space, understood as a fundamental form of material existence. Within this framework, distinctions emerge between the spaces of living and non-living nature, as well as the realm of human cognition, referred to as the noosphere. The latter, as an object of study, gains particular significance in social contexts, as it reflects the interplay between societal structures and the broader biosphere and cosmos.

In the context of international relations and political science, these spatiotemporal dynamics are particularly salient in understanding the evolution of media space as a domain where "events are characterized by their position in spacetime." Events in this domain possess a dual character: they occur within the physical realm ("first nature") while simultaneously being mediated and reinterpreted within the constructs of the "second nature." This interplay is pivotal in shaping public discourse and collective memory, particularly in the digital age, where, as Žižek (2014, p. 233) notes, the "second nature" compensates for the erosion of direct, unmediated experiences in the "first nature."

Media space, as a specific form of social space, operates at the intersection of law, political phenomena, and international relations, serving as a platform for the negotiation of truth and collective identity (Nikolaychuk *et al*., 2020). The "perception of media space as a repository of contradictory events" facilitates the humanization of the spatiotemporal continuum and enables critical examination of how historical and political narratives are constructed, contested, and transformed over time (Zhigalova; Iskhakov, 2017, p. 11).

In time, a social space of reason emerges, encompassing both the past and the present. Socially conditioned existence is represented in two aspects: the space of time and the time of space. The time of natural processes includes social time—a dimension reflecting humanity's variability—and its unique component: media time, characterized as the space of human interaction in attributing meanings to the past, present, and future. Notably, "in the digital era, perceptions of time are changing, as is the discipline of history itself, which has transformed into digital history" (Artamonov, 2021, p. 126).

Memory is an integral attribute of human cognition, forming the foundation of individual and collective identity. Ankersmit (2007, p. 23-29) reinterprets and offers a new understanding of memory, referring to it as "historical experience." This implies that only the experience of actual events ensures a future. Consequently, historical memory encompasses and combines collections and fragments of past life, thereby extending into the future. Within

cultural memory, this process inherently includes a topological dimension, reflecting both the structure of recollections and the spatial organization of memory itself (Artamoshkina, 2013, p. 174).

Science begins with establishing concepts that define similarities and differences, serving as fundamental categories for analytical thinking. This principle is particularly evident in the structurally unified domain of topological semantic space. Mathematics plays a pivotal role in advancing the understanding of topology, defining it as "the study of modal relationships between spatial formations, including principles governing connections, arrangements, and sequences of points, lines, surfaces, and bodies or their aggregates in space, regardless of metrics like scale and magnitude" (Uspensky, 2012, p. 226). In our context, the connection and arrangement of entities are represented by phenomena or events of the past and contemporary reflections upon them. This constitutes the space of historical memory, whose topology is formed by media space-time.

The capacity of society to retain memory is inherently limited, as it is accompanied by attenuation, disruptions in focus, illusions, and spatiotemporal distortions. Historical memory, in particular, is intrinsically linked to the phenomenon of forgetting. As noted, "Forgetting, which functions as an integral counterpart to remembering, can become so profound that representations are relegated to the unconscious" (Artamoshkina, 2013, p. 175). Forgetting, however, is not a unidimensional concept. First, it can serve as the antithesis of memory. Second, it may be understood as its complementary aspect. Third, it can manifest as an active attempt to "erase" the past. While these perspectives often carry negative connotations, an alternative interpretation posits that forgetting should not be perceived as the adversary of memory. Instead, memory can function effectively only in a state of equilibrium with forgetting (Kostina, 2011, p. 65). However, the balance between memory and oblivion can be disrupted by subjective intentions, leading to the selective use of past episodes that do not "contradict" the meanings of the present.

With the emergence of Internet space, the dispersion of centers for actualizing historical memory has intensified, culminating in "memorial wars [...] using historical interpretations as a means of identifying 'us' and 'them'" (Bubnov; Saveleva, 2022, p. 84). Media retain events and facts in memory, thereby fulfilling the function of a "communicative tradition" (Plato, 2000, p. 7). This perspective aligns with Dijck's (2007) conclusion that media and memory transform one another, with their interaction grounded in culture. Hence, Erll's idea (2010, p. 389) that "communication mediated by media shapes culture, turning it into a media and digital

culture while still generating representations of the past," alongside Repina's (2011, p. 414) definition of historical memory as "one dimension of individual and collective or social memory—memory of the historical past or, more precisely, its symbolic representation," underpins our research.

The primary goal of this study is to identify the spatial and temporal characteristics of the media expression of historical memory. To achieve this, we analyze the topos and locus of media space-time, formed by the subjects of perception and evaluation of past facts, situated on opposite sides of the process, in their correlation with the present. Thus, the focus of our attention is the "space of dialogue between historical memories of its equal and self-sufficient participants... interactions between actors and their outcomes, and hence the events and their representations captured in collective and cultural memory. The interpretation of events relies on correlating the intrinsic content of events with broadly understood historical contexts, both synchronous (at various levels) and extended over time" (Repina, 2020, p. 39).

Thus, the purpose of this study was to examine how media representations shape historical memory through spatial-temporal dimensions.

Research methods

To achieve the purpose of the study, the author applied a qualitative, mixed-method approach designed to capture both the structure of media-shaped memory and the subjective experiences of its perception.

Given that the participants were university students who attended a curated historical exhibition and engaged with mediated storytelling content, the mixed-method approach—combining focus group techniques, intent analysis, and traditional content analysis—was particularly appropriate and suggested by the design of the study itself. Their experience was not purely observational; it included emotional, reflective, and interpretive dimensions prompted by the structured narrative of the exhibition. This context necessitated methodological flexibility to capture both subjective reactions and underlying meaning-making processes.

The phenomenon of memory/forgetting is examined through the perceptions of a group of respondents who participated in a significant event where interpretations of the past intersected with their media representations. The event chosen for this study is the exhibition project *Hero City Leningrad* (2024) at the Central Manege in Saint Petersburg. The project was

organized by the Saint Petersburg Committee for Culture, the Central Exhibition Hall "Manege," the Alexandrinsky National Drama Theater of Russia, and the ROSIZO State Museum and Exhibition Center. The exhibition, combining traditional exposition genres and an audio play in the format of dramatized readings, tells the story of preserving historical heritage in besieged Leningrad, focusing on the activities of industrial enterprises and cultural institutions. Simultaneously, it serves as an artistic exploration of how and why Leningrad residents endured and prevailed. Written opinions from students at the Higher School of Printing and Media Technologies at SPbSUTD served as the material for analysis, with the exhibition forming the starting point of their discussions. The author expresses gratitude to R. G. Ivanyan, Associate Professor at the Higher School of Printing and Media Technologies of SPbSUTD, for active participation in organizing the sociological experiment.

The written survey served as a unique conclusion to the focus group conducted in a distinctive form. As Popova (2011, p. 129) notes, "the highest effect is achieved when discussing compact problems or stimulus situations." In this case, the exhibition project at the Manege itself served as the stimulus material, with an artistic audio guide narrating the events of the past from the perspective of Leningrad residents who lived through the blockade and seemingly speaking to visitors today. An additional layer was provided by the research organizer's notification about the study's goal and peculiarities, serving as a conceptual framework for shaping the participants' reflections. Particular attention was directed toward these aspects of the subject matter: "Over 80 years later, the same event is perceived differently; time reshapes memory, blurring or replacing past realities with vivid reinterpretations."

A total of 27 respondents took part in the study. Among them, 8 participants— approximately one third of the group—were native residents of Saint Petersburg, which is significant given the exhibition's focus on the city's wartime history. The sample included 7 men and 20 women, reflecting a predominantly female composition. The diversity within the group allowed for a multifaceted exploration of how mediated representations of historical memory are received and internalized by young adults in a contemporary educational context. Within 24 hours of the tour, respondents shared their written impressions of what they had seen and heard. The outcome of this asynchronous discussion—a "group normalization, where initially heterogeneous positions are smoothed out" (Popova, 2011, p. 131)—was supplemented by the initial academic attempts of SPbSUTD students to study the intentions of cultural memory.

Through the respondents' reflections, both emotional and rational, our research revealed trends in the functioning of historical memory as an individualized, value-based perception of the past.

Results

The results obtained demonstrate the required reliability and, through subsequent content analysis of respondents' statements, have allowed the identification of key insights in two aspects. Firstly, the focus group materials provide data on the topology of media space-time. Secondly, the data contribute to the analysis of historical memory within the discourse of the digital media society. Respondents' judgments reveal clustered meanings, as their statements cannot be reduced to a single idea. Each participant touched on multiple aspects of what they observed, expressing opinions across the full scope of issues under study. Nevertheless, the main directions of their reasoning were grouped into three categories.

A: meanings related to the analysis of the *locus* and *topos* of media space-time (14 significant statements);

B: judgments about channels and methods for transmitting historical memory (23 significant statements);

C: conclusions about the essence of historical memory and its transformation in response to societal demands for shaping individual and collective identity (28 significant statements).

Any exhibition inherently directs the viewers' attention, and in this respect, the *Hero City Leningrad* project is no exception. Used as stimulus material, it encourages each visitor to perceive the exhibition as a uniquely localized space of historical time. Respondents described it as "in this space, each story is a piece of a larger tapestry" (D. Andreeva), "a window into the past" (K. Kasumova), and "I feel as though I am right there at the events" (I. Sorochanskaya). The dynamic nature of historical memory was also highlighted, with one respondent noting that "memory is not static; it is subject to new interpretations" (V. Vorontsova), thereby indicating the presence of those who shape historical memory. Another respondent compared historical

memory to a bridge built out of society's needs, describing it as "a fragile bridge between generations. Grand and significant events do not disappear without a trace" (E. Gorovaya).

In this way, the *topos* of media-organized space-time shows a convergence of past and present. One respondent shared, "I was not just an observer; I felt united with the blockade survivors" (S. Bartova), while another remarked, "The exhibition is not merely a collection of historical artifacts but a commemorative space" (I. Sorochanskaya). Immersion in the locus of history can also provoke reflection shaped by the ideological ambiguity of today's media society. For instance, one respondent questioned, "To what extent do authorities deliberately add ideological poison to the historical narrative? The exhibition at the Manege is merely a sanitized version of the tragedy, free of the fleas of corruption and human baseness" (V. Gorovaya). Analyzing such comments reveals multiple layers of perception.

First and foremost, visitors approach the exhibition with preconceived notions about how they will interpret what they see. This predisposition can be viewed in either a positive or negative light. In the positive case, the visitor is mentally prepared to immerse themselves in the historical space, almost making it part of their own life: "I couldn't get through the exhibition without tears. It feels as though you were born in those years" (S. Bartova). In the negative case, the displayed content is rejected: "It's well known that during the blockade, the elites feasted while poor Leningraders ate their own children" (V. Gorovaya). This respondent perceives the exhibition as a deliberate distortion of the past, with their historical memory failing to resonate with that of others: "They present this horror only as heroism, but we should also acknowledge how the nightmare dehumanized people" (D. Balashova).

Another layer of responses highlights issues related to media channels as conduits for disseminating historical information, which shape the topos of the space-time of historical memory. Value-based judgments and instances of emotional engagement with the exhibition were also identified. Emotional evaluation, as part of the overall perception, was particularly pronounced for one-third of the respondents, though this does not imply a lack of emotional engagement among others.

Let us emphasize that one contemporary participant believes that "modern media is a vast platform for shaping the idea of cultural heritage while simultaneously distorting historical truth" (Z. Baghramyan). This observation raises questions such as, "Was everything really as shown in films, exhibitions, and books?" (S. Butorina), as "the features of the past can be replaced with embellished images" (I. Berezovsky), and "history has always been and will remain a pliable material for shaping narratives" (V. Golovnya). At the same time, many

participants are convinced that "modern technologies and means of communication reliably preserve historical memory. The internet, digital archives, and museums make vast amounts of information about the past accessible and preserve historical heritage" (V. Shapovalova).

The issue of the objectivity and authenticity of historical memory resonated deeply with respondents, with 19 out of 27 focus group participants addressing it directly, and almost all reflecting on it implicitly. One respondent noted that "Over time, images fade and are replaced with new ones, often far from the original. If you look closely, the outlines of some images are like blurred strokes — there is a reevaluation of memory artifacts, and historical events lose their true meaning" (Z. Baghramyan). Another participant countered, "I didn't feel that way... such exhibitions, by focusing our attention on specific moments of the past, help carry the memory in our hearts" (S. Bartova).

Some participants asserted that "historical memory is being reinterpreted" (O. Bezverkhnya), while others pointed out that "under changing conditions, the accuracy and values of the past may be lost or reevaluated" (V. Vorontsova), yet emphasized that "reinterpreting historical memory should be considered a mistake" (V. Golovnya). The deliberate distortion of the past, such as presenting a "false picture," was categorically denied by some, with one stating that "this exhibition does not distort memory; it depicts the lives of people, their hardships, not just heroic deeds" (K. Kasumova).

Some respondents refrained from evaluating the potential distortion of historical memory and instead analyzed the process itself. One noted that "historical memory isn't distorted; it's framed within specific boundaries through which the listener or viewer is intended to see only what the author wants. This is the framing effect" (A. Devyatkina). This interpretation resonates with José Ortega y Gasset's (1994, p. 149) idea of the frame of a painting—or, by extension, any museum exhibit—as "a window into the unreal, marvelously cut into the surrounding reality."

This differentiation suggests that historical memory can be classified into three types. The first is personal memory, which our respondents could not possess in the context of the Leningrad blockade, and whose carriers are becoming fewer over time. The second is historical memory transmitted to respondents via media communication channels such as books, films, eyewitness accounts, exhibitions, newspapers, and social networks. The third is historical memory shaped by ideologists as an expression of the current sociopolitical demand. This third type, a form of mediatized historical memory, is unstable, as sociopolitical contexts are more fluid than the cultural values deeply embedded in society.

This does not exhaust the understanding of the media-driven nature of the *topos* of historical memory, as media integrates both the historical space itself and the time that transpired within it, which is psychologically perceived as media time. This highlights the communicative intentions of social experience, allowing the introduction of elements of intent analysis into the study, such as capturing intentions and their characteristics. At the same time, it is important to note that the *topos* of media time in historical memory has increased complexity, characterized by the multilayered nature of its engagement.

To build on the focus group materials already presented, we supplement them with the example of a prior analysis of media time in historical memory. Specifically, we refer to a 2022 student research project titled *Retranslation of Cultural Memory of the Pre-Revolutionary Past Based on Materials from "Illustrated Russia"* by V. Yudin. This work reveals the multilayered structure of the *topos* of media time, as it examined two loci of historical memory. The journal in question was published in Paris, authored and read by Russian émigrés who had left their homeland after the revolution and civil war.

"The defining feature of that historical period," writes the author, "was the process of recollection and subsequent reflection on the past." The journal included a section titled Old Russia, steeped in nostalgia for a lost country. "Long years of wandering, the colorful and murky waves of refugee days, have pushed the vivid pages of the past into an infinite distance," states a caption accompanying photographs of pre-revolutionary St. Petersburg. These emigrants sought to cling to the fleeting memories of their past lives, to pass on the values of their ancestral roots to new generations, and ultimately dreamed of returning to the familiar Russian Empire.

Discussion

In *Illustrated Russia*, photographs from pre-revolutionary publications were reproduced, thereby affirming "the ability of the *topos* to function as a mechanism for preserving and retransmitting cultural memory," a quality "determined by its structure" (Bogdevich, 2019, p. 12). This literary scholar's observation allows us to see traces of different eras in the history of the journal, as well as the *topos* of the media event's origins. Such engagement with media artifacts from different epochs prompts the current analysis to differentiate the concept of time into "past" and "distant past," identifying within them:

1. The time of the first recollection, meaning the memory of the origins of the media artifact of historical memory. For the authors and readers of *Illustrated Russia*, this is the past, social rather than individual in nature, recalled through the media environment of the pre-revolutionary years. For a 21st-century researcher, the past shifts into the distant past, marking the beginning of the media artifact's existence;

2. The past marked by the integration of the *topos* of the distant past into the media sphere of a local community. In the 1920s–1930s, such a local community consisted of Russian White émigrés in Paris, Prague, Belgrade, and other European capitals. This local community possessed not only social but also temporal markers, as its lifespan—and consequently its media content—was distinctly localized;

3. The time of the formation of historical memory. The values inherent to the origins of the media artifact are revealed through the interpretation of the value judgments and sentiments of people who had lost their homeland. Naturally, the cultural code of a society evolves over time, leading to a reinterpretation of past values: the distant past from pre-revolutionary publications is enriched by the experiences of subsequent periods in Russian history. Thus, the representation of the past deepened the understanding of the topos of the media time under study. However, this does not exhaust its complexity. The sociopolitical realities of the 21st century have renewed interest both in the origins of the media event (pre-revolutionary Russia) and in its continuation 10–20 years later (the Russian émigré experience in European capitals). This marks the era of consolidating media events of the past and distant past into the cultural memory of society, fully aligning with philosophical ideas that "the *topos* can be considered a space for the accumulation of meanings" (Plato, 2000, p. 17).

At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, the approach to historical memory underwent fundamental changes. In the media space, previous boundaries were erased, and new ones emerged, shaped by the consequences of the information revolution. During this period, "digital gadgets proliferated through modern technologies without limits, forming the newest, most unexpected, and complex spatial-temporal and organizational-communicative alliances" (Remizov, 2017, p. 40). This has led to a total mediatization of the past and present. Philosophers note that "media significantly influence historical knowledge, altering the reality of history and making it highly subjectively oriented" (Artamonov; Tikhonova, 2020, p. 359).

They also emphasize that in our era, "memory has shifted from the personal and cultural realm into the media sphere, giving rise to what can be called media memory" (Artamonov; Tikhonova, 2019, p. 46).

Under the influence of technologization, the variability of sociocultural processes—including those in the media environment—has intensified. This social variability has taken on a distinctive form, encapsulated by Zygmunt Bauman's (2008) concept of "liquid modernity." Building on this idea, Jansson (2007, p. 191) explains that:

> earlier theories of mass information and communication were products of the 'mass society' and assumed clear boundaries between media message producers and audiences, between text and context, and so on. However, in the era of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2008), a framework of spatial 'blurredness' and 'uncertainty' has emerged.

This has made the study of the properties of the informational environmental space and media time more relevant than ever. The concept of media space involves a dialectic of external and internal, presence and absence, belonging and alienation, "system" and actor, freedom and domination (Nim, 2013). The *topos* of the space-time of historical memory does not unfold as a continuous canvas but instead consists of distinct local formations. For young visitors to the Hero City Leningrad exhibition, the localization of the past resulted in a detachment from broader historical processes, which influenced the depth of their assessments. However, the mere localization of individual attention on a specific past does not constitute the locus of the media space-time of historical memory. The creation of such a locus requires the integration of multiple conditions and efforts.

Primarily, the role of the exhibition's creators should be highlighted. Their efforts, knowledge, and experience shaped the local space-time of the past. The condition for the locus's emergence was the historians' interpretation of societal demands, expressed as articulated public attention to the history of the Leningrad blockade, combined with political interests reflected in state ideology. These are necessary but not sufficient conditions for forming a locus of history. An essential factor is the audience's interest. Each respondent in our study contributed to the formation of the locus of the media space-time of historical memory. In a sense, there are as many loci as there are visitors to the exhibition. These situationally created loci are dispersed and do not overlap but are undoubtedly interconnected. In other words, there is one integral image of the locus for all, but its tone is infinitely nuanced by individual

perception. Visitors not only enter the locus formed here but also shape it into media content through their reflections.

In this dispersed formation, a common language is built upon shared knowledge, even if fragmented or incomplete, and seeks articulation in the public sphere at the right time and place. Media spaces and time are formed through society's activities. Under conditions of maximal technologization of the informational sphere, with its broad accessibility, the media images created are, of course, not fully authentic but are, to some extent, copies that resonate with the original life itself. This understanding aligns with a colleague's formula that defines the "media image as a symbolically visual message generated in the process of social actors' communication, containing semantic references to the cultural memory of a specific community and revealing the structures of public consciousness." Regarding mediatization, we closely follow S. Hjarvard's interpretation, understanding it as the process of representing society through and within media, resulting in a significant dependence of social life on media and their logic. In the context of our study, mediatization is less about the representation of an object in society's space and time and more about its symbolization—the attachment of an image that directly influences individuals and society as a whole. Media images are solidified in cultural symbols that embody the dominant values of society.

Conclusion

This study shows that historical memory in contemporary society is shaped by media as both a repository of the past and a constructor of meaning. Media time integrates historical space and temporality, creating a dynamic framework through which individuals and societies relate to the past. Mediatization plays a key role by transforming historical narratives into symbolic images that reflect cultural values and influence public perception.

The analysis reveals that historical memory is formed by media actors such as ideologists, journalists, and cultural figures, often in response to public demand. However, individuals are not passive recipients. Each person engages with historical content personally, forming a locus of memory that is emotionally and intellectually meaningful. This process is especially evident in mediated educational settings like exhibitions.

Historical memory is fluid and context-dependent. It evolves through interactions between media content and personal interpretation, in line with the concept of liquid modernity. As a result, memory becomes a complex space shared across society but experienced

individually. Its formation involves both intentional communication and spontaneous reflection, making it a central component of identity in the media age.

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