



Transforming Academic Policy Through Lecturer Involvement: A Study at the Program Level

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Abstract :

This study aims to analyze the form, factors, and impact of lecturers' participation in the formulation of education policies in the Education Policy Study Program, Faculty of Education. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, data was collected through semi-structured interviews and institutional document analysis. The results of the study show that lecturer participation not only takes place in formal forums such as study program meetings, curriculum teams, and quality assurance forums, but also through informal forums such as open discussions and personal initiatives. This participation has a direct impact on academic policies, including in the revision of the 2025 curriculum, the development of contextual learning methods, and the improvement of the quality of educational services. The study also found that lecturer participation is supported by open leadership, an inclusive academic culture, and career incentives. However, challenges remain, such as high workloads, time constraints, and inequality of academic qualifications. These findings strengthen the argument that lecturer participation is a strategic element in participatory and adaptive higher education governance. This study recommends strengthening internal mechanisms to accommodate lecturers' involvement more substantially and sustainably in the institutional policy-making process.

INTRODUCTION

The governance of higher education is basically determined not only by formal regulations, but also by the extent to which lecturers are actively involved in the academic policy formulation process (Ahmat et al., 2021; Alenezi, 2023; Zvereva, 2023). Lecturers should not be positioned solely as policy implementers, but also as decision-makers who have a strong orientation to quality (Liu et al., 2023; Muthanna & Sang, 2023; Véliz & Marshall, 2022). However, in daily practice, the space for participation is often reduced only to formal administrative forums, so that lecturers' contributions are often limited to procedural aspects without vast opportunities to voice substantive ideas based on teaching experience and research results (Filbey et al., 2023; Larson et al., 2022; Zurba & Papadopoulos, 2023). In fact, lecturers are key actors who understand the real needs of students and the dynamics of learning in the classroom. As campus autonomy and the Merdeka Learning policy are strengthened, the demand for a more collaborative governance system is increasingly emerging (Gunarso et al., 2023; Muflihini & Warsito, 2024; Nasir et al., 2024). It is in this context that the FIP UNY Education Policy Study Program becomes a strategic forum to examine lecturer participation, both formal and informal, as well as its impact on the direction of academic policy.

Several previous studies have confirmed that lecturers' participation in higher education policy formulation takes place through various formal and informal mechanisms. However, the level of intensity and impact is not completely evenly distributed. One of them is research conducted by Razali et al. (2024), showing that the effectiveness of lecturers' participation in curriculum development in Aceh is primarily determined by inclusive leadership and recognition of local values within the framework of the Merdeka Learning policy. On the other hand, Novoa-Echaurren et al. (2025) emphasized that in the implementation of the "Teaching Practitioners" program, the involvement of lecturers through internal discussion forums plays a crucial role in adjusting policies to the needs of the institution. Meanwhile, Nazari et al. (2024) underlined that the new quality assurance regulation opens up space for lecturers to participate in academic evaluation, although they are still faced with structural obstacles in the form of capacity inequality and weak feedback mechanisms. Different from the macro focus in these studies, this study highlights the dynamics at the study program level, especially the FIP UNY Education Policy Study Program, where lecturer participation has developed from just consultative to more collaborative, with a real contribution to curriculum revision and learning innovation.

Although lecturers' participation in education policy formulation has been raised in various studies, there is still a gap in understanding the dynamics of such participation at the study program level, especially in the context of higher education institutions in Indonesia. The existing literature tends to focus analysis on national policy or the broader institutional level, so micro-aspects such as lecturer personal initiatives, informal mechanisms, and direct impacts on academic policy are ignored. In addition, most studies describe lecturers' participation normatively, without tracing the extent to which their contributions actually influence policy direction. In this context, there have not been many studies that have revealed how formal and informal forums interact with each other and how institutional structures facilitate or limit the strategic role of lecturers. This research is here to fill this gap by comprehensively examining lecturer participation at the study program level as the most contextual academic policy locus.

This research offers a new insight by revealing in depth the dynamics of lecturer participation in policy formulation at the study program level, which has received less attention in previous studies. The focus on the FIP UNY Education Policy Study Program allows for a concrete exploration of the mechanism of lecturer participation in formal forums such as RTM and curriculum teams, as well as in informal forums such as casual discussions and personal initiatives. The novelty of this research lies in the identification of the functional relationship between these forms of participation and the direct impact on policy direction, including curriculum development, learning methods, and accreditation strategies. These findings show that lecturer participation is not just symbolic, but transforms into a collaborative and real impact. In addition, this study highlights structural and individual supporting and inhibiting factors simultaneously, and proposes a contextual and adaptive participation model in academic governance based on lecturer collaboration.

This study aims to analyze the participation of lecturers in the process of formulating education policies in the Education Policy Study Program, Faculty of Education, State University of Yogyakarta (FIP UNY). The primary focus is directed at identifying forms of lecturers' participation in formal and informal forums, analyzing the supporting factors and barriers that affect their level of involvement, and evaluating the

impact of such participation on the quality of academic policy. Using a qualitative approach and case study design, this study examines the first-hand experiences of lecturers as well as the institutional mechanisms that facilitate their involvement. The ultimate goal is to understand how lecturer participation can be transformed into a strategic instrument in inclusive, adaptive, and quality-oriented academic decision-making. The results of this study are expected to make a practical contribution to strengthening the governance of study programs and enrich the discourse on participatory governance in higher education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research was carried out with a qualitative approach through an intrinsic case study design, which was directed to explore in depth the form of lecturer participation in the formulation of education policy in the Education Policy Study Program, Faculty of Education, Yogyakarta State University. The selection of the case study design is based on the consideration that this method provides a space for researchers to comprehensively understand the specific context and institutional dynamics (Allal-Chérif et al., 2021; El-Kenawy et al., 2022; Jankovic et al., 2021). Relevant case studies are used to answer research questions that are "how" and "why" in real-world situations. The focus of this research is intrinsic because it centers on a single case that is considered to have conceptual significance for the researcher (Cleland et al., 2021; Lim, 2024; Paparini et al., 2021). In addition, an interpretive approach is used to capture the meaning of lecturers' experiences as actors in the structure of academic organizations. This research also relies on the theoretical framework of participation Thanh & Thang (2023) and higher education governance (Erickson et al., 2021; Freeman et al., 2021; Slamet et al., 2024), which emphasizes the importance of the distribution of authority and the deliberative role of the academic community in the institutional policy process.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysis of institutional documents. Interviews were conducted with lecturers of the FIP UNY Education Policy Study Program who were selected purposively based on their level of involvement in policy forums, such as study program meetings, curriculum teams, and RTM forums. The interview guidelines are designed to explore the form of participation, perceptions of effectiveness, and the factors that support and inhibit participation. In addition to interviews, the researcher analyzed documents such as meeting minutes, curriculum team decrees, evaluation monitoring results, and policy drafts as secondary forms of data. The research was conducted in FIP UNY from May to August 2025. The researcher acts as the main instrument and establishes an interactive-reflective relationship with the informant. To ensure the credibility of the data, source triangulation and member checking are carried out, which is confirming the results of interpretation to the main informant. This step is in accordance with the validity guidelines in qualitative research according to (Christou, 2025; Coleman, 2021; Holter, 2022).

The data analysis technique used in this study is thematic analysis, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification (Braun & Clarke, 2023, 2024b, 2024a). In the reduction stage, interview data and documents are transcribed, coded, and grouped into key themes such as forms of participation, driving and inhibiting factors, and the impact of participation. The data are then presented in narratives and tables to clarify the relationships between thematic categories. Conclusions are drawn through an interpretive process and verified through member

checking to maintain accuracy. This technique was chosen because it allows for a systematic analysis of complex qualitative data while maintaining the social context and participatory meaning of the informant. With this approach, the results of the analysis can reflect the dynamics of lecturer participation reflectively and credibly, supporting the contribution of research to governance theory and academic governance practices in higher education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Form of Lecturer Participation in Education Policy Formulation

Lecturers' participation in the formulation of education policy includes their involvement in various formal and informal forums within the faculty. Formal forums include study program meetings, curriculum development teams, quality assurance, and management forums such as Management Follow-up Meetings (RTM). Meanwhile, informal forums are present in the form of open discussions, direct input to leaders, as well as personal initiatives of lecturers based on teaching and research experience. Conceptually, this participation reflects the position of lecturers not only as policy implementers, but also as strategic partners who can provide substantive input to the direction of academic policy. In the context of the FIP UNY Education Policy Study Program, this form of participation shows a collaborative pattern, where lecturers can integrate their practical experience with institutional needs. Thus, lecturer participation is an integral part of ensuring that education policies are more contextual, responsive, and applicative.

As emphasized by one of the primary informants, Mr. Arief Rahman, as the Head of Department, "If we talk about curriculum revision in 2025, indeed from the beginning the process has actively involved lecturers. So it is not just about being asked to attend the meeting, but really being given space to compile the course structure, weigh the learning achievements of graduates, and propose learning methods that are considered most suitable for the needs of current students. There are even some additional discussions outside of the official meeting, so that more technical input can be accommodated without being bound by a rigid time."

This is in line with what was expressed by one of the senior lecturers: "Our participation does not stop at formal forums. Often, after class or when there is an opportunity to meet with the leader, we provide direct input related to technical learning matters, such as how students can understand the material more easily if the approach used is more applicable. There is also experience from our research that is then taken into consideration in changing methods. So it is more fluid, sometimes it comes from casual chat, but that is where practical ideas can be captured well."

From the results of the interview above, lecturers are active in the policy formulation process both in official forums and informal communication. This shows that there is a participatory space that is accommodated by the study program. Their involvement in the revision of the 2025 curriculum shows that the resulting policies are closer to the reality of the classroom, because they are prepared with parties who understand the needs of students directly. Meanwhile, engagement through informal input emphasizes the flexibility of participation mechanisms. Thus, the participation of lecturers at FIP UNY does not stop at the consultation stage, but develops towards collaboration. This strengthens the position of lecturers as important actors in

educational governance, where the resulting policies are more contextual and relevant to academic challenges. Departing from this, the form of lecturer participation in policy formulation is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Forms of Lecturer Participation and Their Impact on Policies

Types of Forums/Media Participation	Form of Lecturer Contribution	Specific Impact on Policy	Result
Study Program & Curriculum Team Meeting	Compiling course structure, weighing CPL, and aligning the curriculum with MBKM	The curriculum is more concise, focused, and applicable according to the needs of students.	Draft Curriculum 2025 with simplification of teaching materials
RTM Forum & Quality Assurance	Conveying the results of the Monev, analysis of student evaluation data, proposals for quality improvement	Evaluate data-based policies so that they are more accountable and on target.	Student satisfaction rate >80% with learning
Open Discussion & Feedback	Provide direct input to leaders regarding learning methods and strategies	Learning methods are more varied, contextual, and tailored to the students' needs	Adoption of case- and project-based applicative methods
Lecturer Personal Initiative	Propose ideas based on research and teaching experiences individually	The emergence of innovations in the development of education policies, especially related to creative learning models	Implementation of the hybrid learning model and increasing access to digital learning resources
Preparation for Accreditation & Internationalization	Contribute to document preparation, quality standardization, and international collaboration networks	Study program policies are more directed to global standards, strengthening the competitiveness of institutions	The international accreditation process is underway with the support of 1.2 billion funds
Informal Forum (academic chat, lecturer group)	Casual but substantial exchange of ideas related to learning problems and study program management	Practical ideas can be captured quickly and integrated into policy without convoluted bureaucratic processes.	The idea of community project-based learning is adopted in community service.

Table 1. shows that lecturers' participation in various forums has a direct impact on the policy direction of the study program. Through study program meetings and curriculum teams, lecturers play an active role in compiling the course structure and aligning it with the MBKM policy, resulting in a more concise and applicable curriculum. Participation in RTM and quality assurance forums emphasized the importance of evaluation data as a basis for decision-making, as evidenced by the increase in student satisfaction above 80 percent. Open discussions and feedback provide room for more contextual and project-based learning method innovation. Meanwhile, the personal initiative of lecturers encourages the birth of new policies such as hybrid learning models and wider digital access. Contributions in accreditation and internationalization strengthen global competitiveness with the support of directed policies. Even informal forums, such as academic chats, can generate practical ideas that are immediately

integrated. Thus, this table shows that lecturer participation is the key to shaping adaptive, innovative, and sustainable policies.

The results of the above findings show that the participation of lecturers in the FIP UNY Education Policy Study Program is manifested in various forms, both through formal mechanisms and informal channels. The participation extends beyond the ceremonial aspect, making a real contribution to the formulation of relevant and applicable academic policies. The involvement of lecturers is evident in the curriculum revision process, their activity in the RTM forum, and their role in open discussions that discuss the direction of study program development. This contribution results in policies that are more responsive to student needs, more realistic in implementation, and strengthen accountability in education management. This pattern shows that lecturers have a strategic position in ensuring the quality of the policies produced. Thus, lecturer participation not only reflects academic involvement but also affirms participatory, collaborative, and quality-sustainability-oriented governance of higher education.

Supporting Factors and Obstacles to Lecturer Participation in Education Policy

The supporting factors and obstacles to lecturers' participation in the formulation of education policies are aspects that determine the extent to which their involvement is effective. Supporting factors include supportive leadership, an inclusive academic culture, and career advancement opportunities directly related to involvement in policy. Lecturers feel motivated when there is an academic incentive, an opportunity for further study, or formal recognition of their contributions. On the other hand, the obstacles that arise include high workload, time constraints, and inequality of academic qualifications. Some lecturers have not completed their doctoral studies, thus affecting their capacity to provide substantial input on policy. This combination of supporting and inhibiting factors reflects that lecturer participation cannot be separated from organizational dynamics, professional demands, and available structural support.

As one of the lecturers said, "The factor that drives us to get involved the most is open leadership. For example, every idea or input is not immediately rejected, but is instead considered and, if necessary, discussed again in the forum. It makes us feel valued. In addition, the opportunity to develop a career, such as becoming an accreditation team or an external examiner, is also an additional motivation for us to be active." However, another lecturer emphasized the existence of obstacles, "If the obstacles are clearly there. First, our workload is quite high, between teaching, guiding students, research, and service. So sometimes, even though we want to be more involved, our time is limited. In addition, there is still inequality in terms of qualifications, because not all lecturers have an S3, so the quality of input in the forum is sometimes unbalanced."

The presentation illustrates that lecturers' participation in policy formulation is greatly influenced by institutional dynamics that function as both a driver and an inhibitor. On the one hand, an open and inclusive leadership style creates a participatory space, where lecturers' ideas do not stop at the level of discourse, but are accommodated into strategic policies. Academic incentives in the form of involvement in curriculum projects also strengthen lecturers' motivation to contribute. However, However, obstacles such as layered workloads and unequal academic qualifications lead to gaps in participation rates. Lecturers with stronger capacity tend to play a more dominant role, while other lecturers have limited contributions. These findings confirm that the

effectiveness of participation is not sufficiently dependent on the existence of discussion forums, but rather is highly determined by readiness, competence, and institutional support. Therefore, strengthening supporting factors and mitigating obstacles is an important prerequisite for the realization of participatory and sustainable policy governance.

Departing from this, the supporting factors and obstacles to lecturer participation are presented in Figure 1.

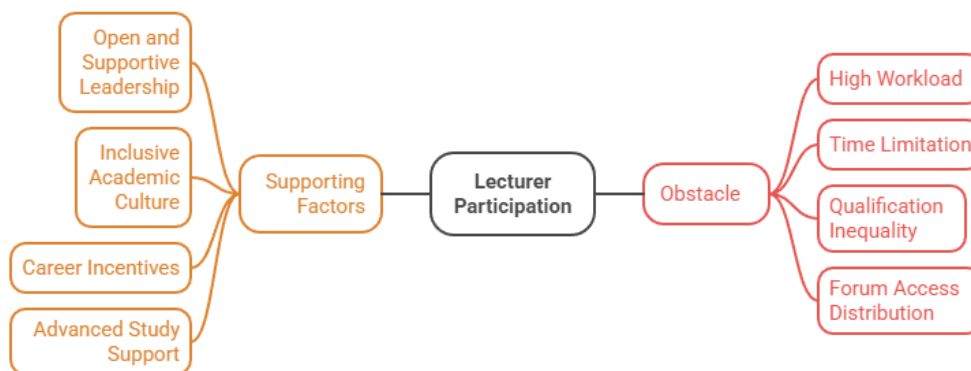


Figure 1. Supporting Factors and Barriers to Lecturer Participation

The results of these findings show that lecturers' participation in policy formulation at FIP UNY takes place within a dynamic framework that is influenced by supporting factors as well as obstacles. Open leadership, an inclusive academic culture, and career incentives are the main drivers that increase the motivation and courage of lecturers to contribute more actively. On the other hand, high workloads, time constraints, and inequality of academic qualifications are real challenges that limit the contribution space of some lecturers. This condition results in an uneven pattern of participation, where the intensity of involvement differs between individuals. However, institutional support through formal forums and facilitation of further studies opens up opportunities to overcome these barriers. By understanding these dynamics, the study program can formulate a more participatory and inclusive governance strategy, thereby providing equal opportunities for all lecturers to contribute their thoughts in the education policy formulation process.

The Impact of Lecturer Participation on the Quality of Education

The impact of lecturer participation on the quality of education is reflected in the increase in curriculum relevance, the effectiveness of learning methods, and the accountability of the academic evaluation system. The involvement of lecturers from the policy formulation stage makes the resulting policies more contextual and easier to implement, because they are based on direct experience in the teaching and learning process. This strengthens the quality of the curriculum that is more focused on learning outcomes, more applicable learning methods, and a more reflective evaluation system. In addition, the participation of lecturers also contributes to the process of internationalization of study programs, for example through their involvement in the preparation of international accreditation and strengthening academic human resources. Thus, lecturer participation not only has an impact on the academic aspect of students, but also on the strategic position of the study program in global competition. This theme

shows that the active involvement of lecturers is a key factor to realize quality and sustainable higher education governance.

This study found that lecturer participation has significant implications for improving the quality of education, both at the micro and macro levels. At the micro level, the involvement of lecturers in the curriculum revision process contributes to the preparation of teaching materials that are more targeted and relevant to the needs of students. The positive impact is evident in the Monev results, which show a high level of student satisfaction with the quality of learning. Meanwhile, at the macro level, the participation of lecturers in the internationalization program shows their strategic contribution in strengthening the position and image of the study program in the institutional realm. This layered impact emphasizes the role of lecturers not only as policy implementers but also as agents of change who encourage the transformation of education quality as a whole. Thus, lecturer participation can be understood as a form of long-term investment in higher education governance that is adaptive, responsive, and able to increase institutional competitiveness.

The results of this finding confirm that lecturer participation has a direct and significant influence on improving the quality of education in the Education Policy Study Program of FIP UNY. At the learning level, the involvement of lecturers in curriculum development and innovation of teaching methods makes teaching materials more relevant to students' needs and increases their learning satisfaction. Meanwhile, at the institutional level, the role of lecturers is in strengthening internationalization strategies and developing the quality of human resources, which is an important aspect in the accreditation process as well as the reputation of study programs in the global arena. Thus, lecturer participation not only has an impact on daily academic practices, but also encourages a transformation of higher education governance that is more adaptive, inclusive, and competitive. The multi-level impact shows that lecturers function as the primary catalyst in the process of transforming the quality of education. The successful implementation of academic policies in this study program strengthens the view that lecturer participation is a crucial factor in building a quality, sustainable, and contextual higher education system.

Discussion

The results of this study show that the participation of lecturers in the formulation of education policies in the FIP UNY Education Policy Study Program is not symbolic, but substantial and collaborative. These findings are relevant to the focus of research aimed at identifying the form, supporting factors, obstacles, and impact of lecturer participation on the quality of education policies. Lecturer participation is manifested in various formal forums, such as study program meetings and RTM, as well as informal forums that reflect the flexibility of academic communication. The relevance of these findings is further strengthened in the context of higher education governance that prioritizes transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to student needs. Therefore, this discussion will relate the findings to the theory of participation in decision-making, the theory of governance in higher education, as well as some previous research findings to strengthen academic interpretation and argumentation.

Form of Lecturer Participation: Lecturer participation is divided into formal and informal forums. These findings support the view that meaningful participation arises when actors have deliberative space and real contributions (Felicetti & Holdo, 2024;

Hofer & Kaufmann, 2023; Pek et al., 2023). Research Ramluggun et al. (2025) It also underlines that effective participation requires clarity of academic roles and legitimacy, which is reflected in the activeness of lecturers in compiling course structures and learning methods. Zhuang et al. (2025) He added that agency theory explains the active role of lecturers as policy agents when incentives, autonomy, and institutional support are available. Thus, the form of lecturer participation in FIP UNY reflects a participatory governance pattern that strengthens the impetus of institutional policies.

Supporters and Barriers Findings related to factors supporting participation such as supportive leadership, inclusive academic culture, and career incentives, are in line with the concept of governance in higher education (Barnes et al., 2021; Gbobaniyi et al., 2023; Wright et al., 2022). They emphasized the importance of power distribution and coordination between actors in creating participatory governance. Inhibiting factors such as workload and inequality of academic qualifications corroborate the findings of Robinson (2025) that inequality of access to policy space hinders meaningful participation. Felicetti & Holdo (2024) also noted that the organisational structure and high administrative burden often undermined lecturers' contribution to policy. However, the existence of strengthening mechanisms such as further studies and facilitation of informal forums is an adaptive mitigation strategy. Therefore, these supporting and inhibiting dynamics emphasize the importance of flexible and adaptive institutional design in supporting equal and productive academic participation.

The Impact of Participation on the Quality of Education. The participation of lecturers in policies has been proven to have an impact on improving the quality of education, both in the academic and institutional dimensions. This is in line with the constructive alignment model Stamov Roßnagel et al. (2021), which emphasizes the importance of consistency between learning objectives, methods, and evaluations. In this context, the participation of lecturers from the policy formulation stage allows the creation of a relevant curriculum and applicable teaching methods. Research Rajabalee & Santally (2021) shows that the involvement of lecturers in policy evaluation has an impact on the accountability of the evaluation system and student satisfaction. Freeman et al. (2021) also emphasize that the Monev system involving lecturers generates strategic feedback for decision-making. Therefore, the participation of lecturers not only improves the quality of curriculum and teaching but also strengthens the competitiveness of the institution through its contribution to internationalization and human resource improvement.

From a practical perspective, this research provides faculty and study program leaders with a guide to strengthen lecturer participation mechanisms through both structured formal and more flexible informal forums. Strengthening this participation space is expected to increase the effectiveness of the resulting policies and strengthen the satisfaction of the academic community with the governance of study programs. From a theoretical perspective, this finding strengthens the relevance of participation and governance theory in the context of higher education in Indonesia by emphasizing the importance of the involvement of academic actors in every decision-making process. In addition, this research also expands the horizon of understanding of agency theory, especially related to how lecturers utilize the available participation space to influence policy direction. Thus, the contribution of this research lies not only in the practical realm of institutions but also in the development of a more contextual and sustainable conceptual framework for higher education policy studies.

Broadly speaking, the results of this study confirm that the participation of lecturers in policy formulation at FIP UNY is a strategic factor that directly contributes to improving the quality of higher education governance. These findings strengthen the relevance of participation and governance theory that positions lecturers not only as implementers, but also as collaborative partners in institutional decision-making. The positive impact can be seen in a more relevant curriculum, a more effective learning process, and the strengthening of the capacity of study programs in internationalization efforts. Looking ahead, it is important to conduct further research on digital participation models, including the use of online platforms in policy discussions, as well as an in-depth analysis of the role of transformational leadership in expanding participatory spaces. Thus, strengthening lecturer participation in the future is expected to support the sustainability of higher education governance that is adaptive, inclusive, and globally competitive.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that lecturers' participation in the formulation of education policies in the FIP UNY Education Policy Study Program takes place actively, both through formal forums such as study program meetings and curriculum teams, as well as more flexible informal channels. This involvement shows a shift in the role of lecturers from implementers to strategic partners in academic decision-making. These findings are relevant to the research objectives that highlight the form, supporting factors, obstacles, and impact of lecturer participation. Collaborative participation has had a direct impact on improving curriculum relevance, the effectiveness of teaching methods, and the accountability of the evaluation system. Nonetheless, structural challenges such as workload and inequality of qualifications still limit equitable engagement. Therefore, strengthening institutional mechanisms and inclusive academic culture is key to maintaining the sustainability of participation. This research emphasizes the importance of participatory higher education governance to support adaptive, contextual, and quality-oriented policies.

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