On the evolution path of ethnic subjective identity theory——Analysis based on LEACH and bath's ethnic view

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Abstract: in the process of continuous evolution and development of ethnic research, many research paradigms have been derived. Investigating their roots, ethnic research can be roughly divided into two research paths: ethnic objective characteristics theory and ethnic subjective identity theory. Most of the later research paradigms evolved on this basis.The author tries to make a brief analysis of the ethnic views of Edmund leach and Frederick bath, two famous anthropologists from 1950s to 1970s, and find out how ethnic subjective identity theory has gradually become the core paradigm of ethnic studies.

Keywords: ethnic research, Leach's view of ethnic groups, Bath's view of ethnic groups

1. Introduction

In the long course of the evolution of human society, affected by many factors, various social organization forms emerge from different groups. After continuous differentiation and combination, they have evolved into various forms. The connotation and extension in different situations are also very different.In a specific period, there will be specific social organizations, such as clans, cell clans, tribes, tribal alliances, etc. in a specific society, they form corresponding combination forms based on different political factors and identity factors and play specific social functions.

"Ethnic group", namely "ethical group", has a long history in western historical documents, but in the actual historical evolution, based on different historical periods, different organizational principles, differences in identity and recognition and other factors, the specific connotation and extension of ethnic groups are uncertain.Therefore, the concept of ethnic group is often mixed with many concepts such as "nation", "race" and "minority", resulting in confusion in people's cognition.With the advent of world globalization, people's ethnic consciousness is becoming stronger and stronger in multi-ethnic communication. Ethnic conflict has also become a part of today's international hot issues. It is more and more important to clarify the formation path of ethnic subjective identity.

2. Basic concepts

2.1 What is "ethnic group"

What is "ethnic group", the concept of ethnic group is different, and we have not reached complete agreement on the specific concept.From the perspective of Westerners, Webster's New International Dictionary (1961) defines the concept of "ethnic group" as follows: "a community with cultural traditions, psychological characteristics and body characteristics" [1] It can be seen from this that the early definition of the concept of ethnic group was quite broad, which is an important reason why it is easy to be confused with other concepts later.In the later evolution, the differences on the definition of this concept based on the objective characteristics and subjective identity of ethnic groups were derived.Therefore, scholars' discussion on the concept of ethnic group is in the ascendant, but they have reached some consensus.

Anthropologists generally believe that ethnic groups have homogeneity in the following aspects: biological continuity, the same cultural values, unified forms of cultural expression, the public sphere of communication and interaction, the functions of intra ethnic identity and extra ethnic identity, and so on [2] in the study of the concept of ethnic group, there are many complex concept definitions due to different starting points.Xu Jieshun, a domestic scholar, has defined ethnic groups in three aspects, which has been basically recognized by the domestic academic circles. He believes that "the so-called ethnic

group is a social entity that recognizes some social and cultural elements and consciously becomes me.This concept has three meanings: one is the recognition of some social and cultural elements; The second is to treat him "consciously for me"; The third is a social entity."[3] In addition, Kan Zhixiang also summarized the academic community's consensus on the concept of ethnic group in the following aspects.1. Common belief origin and common identity are the most significant characteristics. 2. It has kinship and long-term existence with human society. 3. It is produced by member identity, defines the boundary of ethnic groups according to cultural characteristics, and distinguishes between self and others, which is changeable.4. Ethnic groups are hierarchical, and the range of ethnic groups is different in different scenes. 5. Ethnic groups connect emotions and interests, and are often defined based on common interests [4] In short, ethnic groups are homogeneous human communities based on a series of common historical, cultural, religious and other reasons. They have the functions of internal identification and external identification. Driven by interests, ethnic groups are often in a process of dynamic evolution.

2.2 What is "nationality"

When it comes to ethnic groups, ethnic identity is inevitable.Ethnic identity, as a tool for ethnic groups to distinguish themselves from others, is based on some common characteristics, resulting in a sense of pride in internal identity and a sense of exclusion from the outside.In different periods, the intensity of people's sense of ethnic identity is different. When people are aware of the threat of the other, that is, when ethnic identity is enhanced. If ethnic groups do not recognize the emergence of the other in the interaction, there is no concept of ethnic identity. Driven by different politics and interests, different groups will also carry out different cultural construction of nationality.

There are two different paths in the construction of nationality based on objective characteristics and subjective identity.LAN Linyou believes that "objective and subjective factors are essential elements for the existence of an ethnic group.Generally speaking, the objective factors include language, religion, region, social organization, culture, race, common origin and so on.Subjective factors are roughly any combination of specific factors selected by a group as a common resource for claiming identity and obtaining a certain goal. "[5] It can be seen that ethnic groups are difficult to determine only by unilateral factors. Based on different factors, even people in the same group will produce different ethnic identity because of differences in some specific aspects.It should be emphasized that the identity of nationality does not appear out of thin air. It must be stimulated in the interaction with others.

2.3 "Ethnic group" identity and research paradigm

"Identity" was originally a conceptual category of a philosophical system. Later, it has been widely used in the field of social science. It mainly refers to the attribution of people's subjective values.In the field of ethnic and ethnic studies, identity is often regarded as "the cognitive and emotional attachment of social members to their ethnic affiliation." [6] Therefore, ethnic identity is often formed when the same group belongs to a certain group based on historical memory, cultural characteristics and other factors.Of course, ethnic identity will vary in intensity and level due to different specific situations.

Due to different emphasis points, the study of ethnic identity has derived complex research paradigms such as primordial theory, situational theory, boundary theory, integration theory, opposition theory and so on [7] but in the final analysis, the most basic theories are only primordial theory (foundational theory) and constructivism (Instrumental theory or situational theory), and other research paradigms are roughly developed on this basis.The difference of this theory is also obvious. The primordial theory emphasizes the importance of the objective characteristics of ethnic groups and holds that ethnic identity is a fixed and eternal concept; Constructivism is just the opposite. They emphasize the importance of ethnic subjective identity and believe that ethnic groups are constructed in different situations and have the characteristics of mobility.Admittedly, the separation between the two is obvious, but the two theories have their own rationality from different emphases, which is also an important reason for the later integration theory to develop into a new research paradigm.

3. Paradigm shift in Ethnic Studies

For a long time in the study of ethnic groups, the original theory of emphasizing the objective characteristics of ethnic groups, such as shared language, culture, mode of production and other characteristics, holds that ethnic identity is an inherent emotion, which is extremely stable and continuous.Whether in the eyes of academia or the general public, primitivism is the only truth of ethnic

group research. They naturally determine the rationality of the theory.Until Max Weber gave the following new definition of ethnic group: "ethnic group is such groups that have subjective belief in common descent either because of their similar physical characteristics or customs, or because of both, or because of the memory of colonization and immigration; This belief is certainly of great significance for group construction, but it doesn't matter whether there is an objective blood relationship." [8] It can be seen that in Weber's concept, the subjective identity of ethnic groups occupies the primary position, while the objective characteristics occupy the secondary position. The subjective identity of ethnic groups is the most important factor constituting ethnic groups. Therefore, in the eyes of many scholars who oppose the primordial theory, many objective characteristics of ethnic groups are often summarized in the later stage after the formation of ethnic groups based on subjective identity. It is putting the cart before the horse to take the objective characteristics of ethnic groups as an important factor in the formation of ethnic groups.

What symbolizes the real change of ethnic research paradigm is the publication of Edmund Leach's political systems in Myanmar Highlands in 1954. It really changes the paradigm of ethnic group research from the single track operation of primitivism to the parallel situation of primitivism and constructivism. Then, after the publication of the collection of papers "ethnic groups and boundaries" edited by Frederick bath in 1969, the idea of ethnic subjective identity has aroused extensive influence and reflection in the academic community, and established the important position of Constructivism in ethnic studies.

3.1 Edmund Leach's view of ethnic groups

1) Subjective identity in "dynamic balance"

It is an inextricable topic to explore Leech's research on the Kachin people in Myanmar and his inheritance and application of Weber's "ideal type" thought in the analysis of the operation of social structure""Ideal type" is also known as "ideality", which is an important ideological mark of anti positivism in his academic thought and the use of humanism in social research. This important social research method is also one of the important reasons why Weber's academic thought became famous at home and caused extensive influence.In Weber's view, the complexity of social research is difficult to explain clearly only from the society itself. The understanding of society can only be recognized by people after it is highly abstract.Therefore, Weber constructs an idealized operation mode in which all parts of the society tend to be consistent, so as to form a sharp contrast with the actual situation in the social operation. People get a clearer and essential understanding of the society in the analysis of the gap between ideal and reality [9]

Edmund leach constructed the Kachin society into two different types of social ideals, and the dynamic system of social equilibrium he discussed was established between the two types of ideals.In the Kachin Mountains studied by Li Qi, there are two kinds of people with differences in language and culture. One is the Shan people who take rice farming as the main way of livelihood in the river valley; One is the Kachin people who retain the original slash and burn livelihood in the mountains [10] One type of social ideal constructed by leach is the autocratic hierarchical rule based on the Shan people, and the other is the primitive democratic system called "Gong Lao" system by Kachin. Lich believes that these two types of social systems are the ideal social types pursued by Kachin people. People will choose to pursue one of the forms of political rule based on their subjective identity and different interest demands in different periods of time. The actual situation of Kachin social structure is a dynamic swing system often between these two ideal types, but it will not be fixed on one of them. Kachin people call this unstable social system "gonza" system.

From the perspective of ethnic studies, we can not ignore the great role of Kachin's own subjective will choice in the evolution of Kachin society.We often think that the leading role of objective characteristics in the formation of ethnic groups did not appear in the social evolution of Kachin people, but people's identification factors based on subjective cognition occupied the upper part, which pried the absolute scientific majesty of objective characteristics in ethnic group research.Even in the dynamic evolution of Kachin society, the upper class of Kachin aristocracy will regard themselves as a part of the Shan people based on their pursuit of the hierarchical social system of the Shan people.This is quite incredible in the view of objective characteristic theory. The obvious objective differences in region, language and culture they believe in have become ignored among the Kachin people.The ethnic identity formed based on the identity of the Shan hierarchy can regard the Kachin as a unified ethnic group with the Shan people, and the pursuit of the original democratic system can stand the ethnic identity of the Kachin against the Shan people. It also tells us that ethnic identity is not only based on the objective characteristics of the ethnic group, but also firm and immutable, Ethnic group is a group that changes

with subjective identity.The author believes that in Lich's study of Kachin social structure, it not only explains that the social structure is a dynamic and balanced system, but also explains the dynamic evolution of ethnic identity in Kachin society.

2) The intervention of politics and rights in Nationality

In the eyes of those primitivist scholars who believe that the division of ethnic groups is based on objective reality, it is difficult to form a connection between the ownership of ethnic groups and political rights.However, from a practical point of view, it is difficult for us to believe that in a society where political rights are pervasive, there is the ability to form a group only by relying on this original force, and the ethnic group can not happen to be the survivor.People from different angles will have different views on the same thing. For people within the ethnic group, they are often born with the ethnic group, but in the eyes of the national ruling class, those ethnic markers are often the tools they use to distinguish ethnic groups.

From the perspective of ethnic origin, Jingpo people in China and Kachin people in Myanmar are homologous. Therefore, from the perspective of ethnic primitivism, they have common ethnic historical memory, language and areas where they once lived together. These characteristics can deduce that the ethnic identity of Jingpo people and Kachin people is consistent.However, with the birth of political rights in different countries, it is difficult for us to distinguish those cultural characteristics of Jingpo nationality, which are constructed as ethnic symbols, and those ethnic characteristics are the original and unique characteristics of Jingpo cultural system.As far as the political systems of Jingpo people and Kachin people are concerned, we can find the emotional identity of different ethnic groups extended from different political environments.

In the Kachin political organization system, there is a political system of "eating legs" mountain officials, which is generally consistent with the system type called "Ningguan" mountain officials or "official legs" mountain officials in Jingpo language.The difference is that the mountain official system of Jingpo people is divided into three categories: large, medium and small. Each mountain official has the whole of external representation and internal governance, especially in his own jurisdiction [11] it can be seen that the mountain official system of Jingpo nationality has the color of feudal hierarchy. Because mountain officials can form a strong ruling order in their own jurisdiction, people within the ethnic group also form a relatively fixed ethnic identity for mountain official rule.

Kachin's mountain official system reflects a dynamic swing system between "gongsa" and "gonglao". People's identification with ethnic groups is relatively chaotic. People will change their ethnic identity according to the strength of political rights, and there is far more than a sense of belonging among Kachin people. The mountain official aristocracy within the Kachin people often plays a decisive role in the selection and formation of this ethnic identity.Kachin mountain officials often have the right to control their followers and pay tribute. When the Kachin aristocracy begins to pursue their rights, they will dream that they can have strong hierarchical rule rights like the Shan people. They will put their political and economic appeal into the recognition of the hierarchical system by their own people, so as to promote the transformation of people's ethnic identity, the corresponding family characteristics will also change. In pursuing this right, the Kachin nobility will also be affected by Shan rule and external state politics. When the pursuit of this right reaches such an extreme that the Kachin people can't bear it, the rule of mountain officials will be overthrown, the society will return to the stage of primitive democracy, and the Kachin people's identity will also return to the identity of absolute equal order. They don't recognize the existence of mountain officials in this environment, and the ethnic identity formed by mountain officials will disappear.Therefore, the political influence of the ruling class among Kachin people has a strong control and guiding role in the formation of Kachin ethnic group identity. It is also expressed in the translation preface of the book. After the publication of the book, people rethink ethnic groups and really promote the paradigm shift in ethnic group research.Since then, ethnicity has been expressed as a relative function of social and political relations, and the influence of ethnic politics on ethnicity has begun to be valued by people [10]

3) The maintenance and continuation of nationality by ceremony

The widespread concern of ritual has always been an important category involved in anthropological research. When it comes to ritual research, Durkheim's profound exposition on the study of consciousness is inseparable. Durkheim's ritual research is closely related to his "collective consciousness". He believes that: "people create the sacred things of the group through collective public rituals, and stimulate the group's belief in it, this sacred object is often expressed in the form of tribal totem in the primitive society, and finally the collective consciousness of the community can be maintained and revived." [12] in Durkheim's ritual research, it is not difficult to find that the collective

ritual has a strong cohesive effect on the common historical memory and sacred belief of the people in the family, and the sacred things created in the ritual are an important symbol to condense the collective consciousness internally and distinguish the other externally.

Although Durkheim does not directly link ritual research with ethnic group research, in the author's opinion, Durkheim's collective ritual research plays an important role in ethnic group research. This can be seen in Leach's ethnic group research of Kachin people, although leach has always had reservations about Durkheim's sacred secular absolute dichotomy method.Lich believes that rituals not only exist in the sacred category as Durkheim said, but also include rituals in people's secular behavior. It is difficult to interpret the significance of rituals that do not exist to meet people's needs only by Malinowski's functional analysis method.Therefore, in Lich's view, the customs formed by rituals all over life play a vital symbolic role in people's life. The ceremony itself is a symbolic behavior of people, and people within the ethnic group will carry out a series of psychological connections according to this ethnic symbol [10] the author believes that Leach's Association Based on ritual symbols is an important factor in the formation of ethnic groups, people's common memory, common values and even the root of ethnic continuity. Moreover, the ubiquitous ritual symbolism in life not only builds a communication platform that can communicate and understand each other within the ethnic group, but also becomes an important dividing line between insiders and outsiders because this ritual symbolism will not be easily understood by outsiders.

In the study of Kachin people, ritual and myth play the same role in essence, but Lich believes that the role of ritual and myth in Kachin people is different from that of Durkheim and Malinowski. The latter believes that myths and rituals play a role in condensing the whole society, while the former is interpreted from another angle. He believes that myths and rituals play a role in distinguishing ethnic groups and factions among Kachin people. The common myth system will fabricate completely different story contents in different ethnic groups, and different myths are the sustainers of different ethnic groups, in the Kachin people, there is a separatist mechanism opposite to integration. For example, the story of gaorishan official and his neighbors, which is widely spread among Kachin people, has been subtly transformed in different groups. The specific content of the story told by elder Gong and elder Gong SA is obviously inconsistent.The differences in the content of fairy tales produce differences between different groups, play a maintaining boundary between different ethnic groups, and even evolve into ethnic conflicts at some times [10]

3.2 Frederick Bath's view of ethnic groups

In the 1960s, the subjective identity path of ethnic group research has been further developed, and the subjective identity theory of ethnic group research has reached the level of keeping pace with the objective characteristic theory. From the controversial stage at the beginning, subjective identity theory has gradually been accepted by people. On this basis, situational theory, boundary theory and other related theories have become an important theoretical paradigm of ethnic group research.In 1969, the publication of the collection of papers "ethnic groups and boundaries" edited by Frederick bath aroused widespread repercussions in the academic community. Bath's deep insight into ethnic boundaries from a unique perspective marked the birth of the boundary theory of ethnic studies.

1) The important role of ethnic interaction

Bath's ethnic studies were influenced by Leach's academic thought. The relationship between the two had been both teachers and friends at the London School of economics, which deeply branded Bath's academic research in the later stage. Buss thinks that the static study of ethnic groups is inappropriate. Therefore, he adopts the research path figured out with leach to conduct a dynamic study of ethnic groups. Bath emphasized the importance of dynamic interaction between ethnic groups and changed people's research on ethnic groups from a single ethnic group to an interactive research from a multi-ethnic perspective. Ethnic identity is formed in the interaction with others. Perhaps without the existence of others in self cognition, people will never produce the internal identity of ethnic groups.For example, the consciousness of the Chinese nation's community was formed in the process of the Chinese nation resisting foreign aggression. We have to admit that the influence of foreign nationalities has a strong promoting effect on the emergence of the consciousness of the Chinese nation's community.

Bath believes that "in the process of continuous interaction with other ethnic groups, ethnic groups have produced their own subjective emotional identity. It is the sense of exclusion from other ethnic groups and the sense of identity with their own ethnic groups generated in the interaction with other ethnic groups that promotes the generation of ethnic identity consciousness, and ethnic identity also

depends on the continuous interaction with different ethnic groups." [13] In the past, ethnic identity was maintained by common objective material characteristics. If there were material differences in clothing, food, housing and transportation among different ethnic groups, they would naturally form the concept of self and others. In fact, in the eyes of ethnic subjective identity scholars, the objective material as a marker of ethnic distinction can be constructed and changed.It is difficult for us to distinguish whether the objective object as ethnic identity appeared before or after the emergence of ethnic identity. If it appeared later, the ethnic objective identity must be constructed according to people's subjective will. In this way, there are many deficiencies in the objective characteristics of ethnic groups as the judgment standard of ethnic distinction.

Bath believes that "ethnic identity is a high-level identity, which will bind individual subjective identity. The ethnic identity generated in the interaction will gradually assimilate various individual identities into a consistent collective identity, so as to promote the consistency of people's value standards and behavior standards."[13] From here, we find that ethnic groups play a unique internal organizational role in people's interaction. Different people will classify people in the interaction for different purposes, so that people divided into one category have a common ethnic identity. There are differences within ethnic groups. In different periods, ethnic groups emphasize different classification standards and different emphases, those differences that are not noticed will be tolerated in the same ethnic group. Therefore, even if there are acceptable differences in the same ethnic group, under the organization of the ethnic group, each ethnic group will carry out behavior activities in line with its own ethnic group temperament according to its own ethnic group category, so as to maintain the unique cultural characteristics of the ethnic group within the ethnic group.

2) The important role of ethnic boundaries

In the eyes of ordinary people, the word "boundary" means division and isolation, but when bath mentioned ethnic boundaries, it was associated with the interaction between ethnic groups and the maintenance of cultural differences.In previous studies, ethnic boundary means to distinguish between the self and the other, but bath believes that "it is the existence of differences between ethnic self and the other that makes it necessary for ethnic groups to interact.Then the existence of the difference boundary between ethnic groups is actually a tool to promote the interaction between ethnic groups.In order to maintain the interaction between ethnic groups, it is necessary to protect the unique cultural characteristics of ethnic groups. " [14] Bath's interpretation and analysis of the unique perspective of ethnic boundary made the academic circles have a deeper understanding of ethnic boundary, and even later developed into one of the research paradigms of ethnic theory.

Bath believes that the formation of ethnic groups is precisely because of the existence of ethnic boundaries, and this boundary is not a dusty boundary formed by objective factors such as geography, history, culture and religion, but a continuous flow and transformation of social boundaries [13] in the study of ethnic groups, we often regard ethnic groups as primitive, especially the boundary formed by differences in geographical and material production modes is equivalent to the ethnic boundary, but we ignore that it is difficult to form the necessary sense of belonging and exclusion in such a primitive and closed environment. Ethnic groups are not born when geographical boundaries are isolated, but after people have Boundary Consciousness in interaction, the concept of ethnic groups comes into being. The complementary nature of people in mutual interaction is also an important reason for the connection between ethnic groups. Therefore, we can draw the following conclusion: ethnic identity is the subjective emotion generated by ethnic groups in the interaction. In terms of the existence of ethnic boundaries, ethnic groups maintain their existence. If the boundaries disappear, ethnic groups no longer exist.

We also need to emphasize that ethnic boundaries are constantly flowing with the changes of many factors. When different ethnic groups living in the same region face foreign ethnic groups with greater differences from them, that is, ethnic groups do not belong to the same ethnic group in identity, but under the organizational system of ethnic groups with greater common differences with them, the ethnic boundary between them disappears and the original differences between ethnic groups are ignored, The similarities are emphasized to form and integrate under the organization of ethnic groups to form new ethnic groups. Similarly, when the common recognition factors outside the same ethnic group disappear, the differences within the ethnic group will often be strengthened accordingly. Often at this time, there is a split into multiple ethnic groups within the ethnic group. This ethnic group has different forms of division and integration due to the change of boundary, which objectively proves that ethnic boundary plays an important role in maintaining ethnic group existence. At the same time, the principle of division and integration between groups is similar to the organization and division principle of hereditary groups in the study of African political system by Evans Pritchard as early as 1940, but it has not been connected with ethnic boundaries [12]

3) Research on multi-ethnic society

In a complex society, ethnic groups are often included. In a complex society, the insight into multi-ethnic relations is an important content of ethnic group research. In a multi-ethnic society, how ethnic minorities maintain their cultural characteristics, maintain the characteristics of social and cultural diversity, and even how ethnic minorities ensure their own status equality and legitimate rights and interests are the top priority of ethnic research. Bath believes that the existence of multi-ethnic groups in complex society is inseparable from the complementary relationship between ethnic groups. He also explained the multi-ethnic society from ecology and demography, which is of great reference significance to the later ethnic research.

From the perspective of ecology, multi-ethnic society must be carried by a variety of ecological environment. Different ethnic groups will adjust to local conditions and carry out their own livelihood at the lowest cost. In order to ensure the normal operation of complex social mechanisms and minimize the damage to the ecological environment, all ethnic groups must depend on each other and maintain their trade relations. Of course, disputes among ethnic groups are inevitable because of conflicts of interest and resource constraints.

From the perspective of demography, the carrying capacity of the natural environment for the population is limited. In bath's view, the flow of people between different ethnic groups composed of ethnic boundaries maintains the dynamic balance of the population [14] in a complex society, multi-ethnic groups are often connected and symbiotic. Another impact of this relationship is that when one ethnic group changes greatly, the other ethnic group must make corresponding adjustments, so that the interaction between ethnic groups has an impact on the population of other ethnic groups.

4. Summary

The continuous deepening of ethnic research is an inevitable way to solve many ethnic problems under the complex social background. Lich's fieldwork among the Kachin people in the mountainous areas of Myanmar first leveraged the ethnic research paradigm with the theory of ethnic objective characteristics as the core, connected the ethnic research with the political relationship of society, and opened up a new vision of ethnic research. Since then, the ethnic research of ethnic subjective identity theory has risen rapidly as opening up the two veins of Ren and Du. In the 1960s, ethnic subjective identity has become the core paradigm of ethnic research. It is also the preface to the collection of papers edited by bath during this period. With a unique perspective of ethnic boundary, which is often ignored, it breaks people's inherent concept of ethnic boundary, and expounds the ethnic boundary formed in the continuous interaction of ethnic groups and its impact on the formation of ethnic groups The maintenance of ethnic cultural characteristics and the importance of communication between ethnic groups have pushed the theory of ethnic subjective identity to a higher position. Perhaps today, the subjective identity of ethnic groups has unfortunately become the ruling tool of the nation-state in many countries, providing a perfect excuse for ethnic separatists, but it is undeniable that it is one of the main paradigms of ethnic group research as the core.The subjective identity approach of ethnic research provides us with an important way to understand the essence of ethnic groups, the important role of ethnic identity, ethnicity and other complex concepts affecting ethnic groups, and an important way to reasonably solve ethnic problems under the complex social background of multi-ethnic groups.

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