

“Money Politics” and “Ethnicity” in Voting Decisions during Tanzania Presidential Election

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the influence of “money politics” in the voting decisions amongst voters in Tanzania. It was carried out immediately after the 2015 general election in the country. It sought to answer the problem using a qualitative research approach which used four Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to collect data. The informants of the study were selected from the districts of Illelela and Nyamagana in Mwanza Tanzania. Each group comprised of 12 participants who were purposefully selected. These informants were selected because they had participated in the Tanzania general election. The method was chosen because it offers a mean to explore people’s experiences and opinions. A thematic analysis was used to analyse and manage the data whereby all necessary cleanings, transcription, coding, organizing, and theme were observed in the process. The findings reveal that ethnicity has a slight influence (54%) in the voting decisions amongst voters in Tanzania compared to money politics (46%). The findings further reveal that women voters in Tanzania are more influenced (63%) by money politics than men (37%), likewise, men voters are more influenced (57%) by ethnicity in their voting decisions and preferences than women. The findings indicate ethnicity and money politics are important predictive variables in determining the outcome of an election.

Keywords: *Money politics, ethnicity, election campaigns, voting decisions, Tanzania.*

INTRODUCTION

Money politics in this study has been used to refer to the excessive use of money (cash), free lunch, free gifts, free transports, and distribution of salt, t-shirts, caps, mobile phones, sugar, clothes (Khanga), matchboxes, and the like items during election campaigns. According to Bartels (2000), the process of election normally goes hand in hand with some campaigns where aspirants are given platforms to advertise their policies and manifestos to their prospective voters. During this process, politicians use different techniques to make sure that they catch the attention of prospective voters and eventually win the elections. Among the technique used is the use of money and ethnicity whereby politicians or their agents use money or their ethnicity to influence the voting decisions amongst prospective voters.

Money politics during elections encompasses not only the distribution of money (Nadeau & Lewis-Beck, 2001), but it also covers issues like free gifts as previously stated above. In Tanzania, money politics mainly covers the distribution of caps, clothes, salt, matchbox, money, and many other free items which politicians use to manipulate the minds of prospective voters toward their voting decisions. Currently, Tanzania has had five general elections since the

establishment of the multiparty politics in the country in 1992. According to the Reeves and Klein (1995), Tanzania conducts two types of elections, namely; the general election and the local government election. The general election is conducted to elect the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and the President of Zanzibar, and also to elect Members of Parliaments and Ward Counsellors. On the other hand, the local government election is conducted to elect local government representatives such as village chairpersons and street chairpersons at the grassroots leadership of the government. Furthermore, both general and local government elections are done every five years though they are not done concurrently; local government elections are conducted one year earlier than the Presidential general election.

The main purpose of conducting similar elections in both Tanzania and Zanzibar is due to the historical settings. Tanzania is a united republic, established after the union of the two countries that are Zanzibar and Tanganyika which merged in 1964 to form the United Republic of Tanzania whereby the two countries agreed to have two governments, namely; the government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the government of Zanzibar whereby the President of the United Republic of Tanzania takes charge of all matters of the government of Tanzania as determined by the constitution whereas the President of Zanzibar takes charge of all matters of Zanzibar government.

ELECTION CAMPAIGNS IN TANZANIA

Since the establishment of multiparty politics in 1992, Tanzania has conducted a total of five general elections to elect the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and President of Zanzibar, Members of Parliaments and Ward Councillors. Under the multiparty system, Tanzania witnessed a number of political parties being established to compete with the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), some of those political parties includes; Civil United Front (CUF), NCCR Mageuzi, and Chama Cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA).

The first election to be conducted in the country was that of 1995 where Mr. Benjamin Mkapa of CCM emerged winner amongst other Presidential candidates after gaining about 61.8 percent of the total votes. The second election was again conducted in 2000 whereby Mr. Benjamin Mkapa from the ruling party CCM retained his seat. The third election was done in 2005 where Dr. Jakaya Kikwete from the ruling party emerged winner and in 2010 Dr. Kikwete was re-elected again. The fifth election in the country is that of 2015 which put in power the current President Dr. John Pombe Magufuli from the ruling party CCM after a slight victory of about 59 percent against his giant counterparty the former Prime Minister Mr. Edward Lowassa of CHADEMA who garnered about 39.97 percent of the total votes.

As has been the practise of all the past five general elections in the country, Tanzania has also witnessed a number of campaigns being done by politicians and their agents or followers. It should be noted that it is mandated by the National Election Commission (1995) that any candidate contesting for any political position in the country should conduct a campaign to advertise his or her policies, and such a campaign may be done by the respective candidate himself of his or her agent.

According to Mwidima (2018) as cited from the National Election Commission (2010) of Tanzania, the campaign period begins one day after the nomination of candidates from the respective political parties and ends one day before the election day, thus, the 2015 general election campaigns begun immediately after the nomination of such candidates on 22nd August

2015 and ended on the 23rd October 2015. In response to sections 40 – 43 of the presidential and parliamentary regulations of 2015, and sections 35 – 37 of the councillor's (elections) regulations of 2015, political parties which had candidates vying for various posts in the general election were required to provide their tentative campaign timetable to the Electoral Commission for co-ordination during the campaign period.

Furthermore, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) sets the rules of the game during election campaigns. For example, according to NEC (2000), the presidential election campaign should be comprised of at least some representatives from political parties with candidate contesting for such a presidential post. Other guidelines provided by the National Electoral Commission are found in Act No. 6 of 2010 which intends among other things, to control excessive use of funds in election activities. The law requires transparency in the sources of income, expenditure, contributions and it also provides ceilings on the amount of money to be spent during Elections. This is to prohibit corrupt practices within political parties and in elections. The registrar of political parties is responsible for the enforcement of this law.

MONEY POLITICS IN TANZANIA'S' ELECTIONS

The use of money to win the election in Tanzania is very common. Apart from the use of other techniques, politicians have concentrated much into the use of their wealth to influence prospective voters. In other words, money politics in Tanzania has been suspected to influence most of the voting decisions amongst prospective voters. Generally, the essence of money politics during election campaigns in Tanzania specifically entails the distribution of money, free lunch, salt, sugar, caps, mobile phones, matchbox, clothes, t-shirts, and many others.

Babeiya (2011) notes that money politics in Tanzania became very common since the beginning of the multiparty election in the country, specifically during the first election under the multiparty system election in 1995. Babeiya explains that due to the presence of competitions amongst political parties, the use of money and other incentives in election campaigns has been visible in most of the elections in the country. Babeiya further points out that during elections in Tanzania, politicians usually use their agents to distribute money to the prospective voters with a purpose of winning the elections. Those agents are usually their friends, family members, local leaders, other political leaders affiliated to the candidate, and many other agents as it may be determined by the candidate. It is noted that the distribution of money is usually done in the night whereby candidates or their agents visit households of prospective voters and give them a sum of money with a condition that they should vote for the respective candidate.

The sum of money given normally varies as it depends on various situations such as the level of education of a voter, geographical location, the tension of election in such a place, and the physical appearance of the voter, but the minimum amount of money given is usually 500 Tanzania shillings. It is noted that during election campaigns in Tanzania, politicians do fetch prospective voters from different areas in the constituencies; they hire lorries and trucks to pick up voters from different corners of the country especially from the rural areas and suburbs and bring them to one stationed place where they listen to candidates giving their campaign speeches and pledges. Likewise, politicians often use their agents to provide free lunch to those prospective voters gathered in those places. In return, prospective voters are conditioned and

expected to support the candidates who have offered them free transport and free lunch as loyalty for their services.

Furthermore, the distributions of salt, sugar, caps, mobile phones, matchbox, clothes, t-shirts, and many others have been so common during election campaigns in Tanzania. It is observed that during election campaigns, politicians and their agents invest much in giving free gifts with a purpose of influencing prospective voters in their voting decisions. The distribution of these gifts is usually directed to the low-income voters, uneducated voters, and the marginalised groups such as women in the rural areas, the disabled men and women and many others.

Surprisingly, Tanzania at one point appeared to give justifications on the use of the money during election campaigns. Under the so-called "Traditional Hospitality Act" (2000) which was commonly known as *takrima* [tips], politicians and the government through political parties, it was declared that the use of the money during election campaigns was allowed due to what they deemed as *takrima*. That being the case, money politics in the country became more vibrant especially to the political parties which were well off compared to the smaller political parties. The implications of such justifications meant that candidates and political parties which had money were justified to use such money in giving voters under the umbrella of hospitality, but the fact was that such money was meant to influence voters in their voting decisions.

MONEY POLITICS IN ELECTIONS

Money during election campaigns has been highlighted to be one of the major affecting variables amid decisions, particularly amid voting inclination where voters cast their votes to the candidates who give them a few cash, guarantees, endowments, or a few other motivating forces. Concurring with Burkhanlter (1997), Ginsberg (2009) cash includes an incredible impact amid political campaigns and decisions where voters make their choices basing or depending on the money or endowments they got from candidates. Money is one of the major deciding components which most of the Indian voters depend on amid voting process (Hazarak, 2015). Other components (such as media surrounding or group of onlookers framing) don't have a significant influence on the gathering of people voting inclinations in spite of the fact that it can be conceivably for a few individuals to require the cash (since it is given in a deliberate way) and still they can vote for a distinctive candidate of their choices.

Big countries such as the United State of America is amongst other giant countries which have acknowledged and confirmed that the use of the money during election campaigns has been one of the major factors which determine the voting decisions amongst prospective voters in that region. This claim is supported by Whatman (2009) who confirms that the use of money in elections has been one of the big influential factors in the voting decisions amongst American voters. Whatman cites the 1998 presidential election in the USA where it was estimated that candidates had raised to about one billion US dollars which among other expenditures the money was used to influence prospective voters in that election.

Furthermore, money politics during election campaigns makes prospective voters loyal to the political parties of candidates who give them such money. Frederick and Streb (2010) notes a similar experience when they insist that in almost every election which is dominated by the use of money, it is very common that political parties or candidates who use such money have always emerged winners in such elections compared to the small parties especially the opposition

parties which have all the time seemed to fail to influence or make prospective voters loyal during the voting decision. In other words, the practical implication here is that those who have money to give to the voters are always likely to influence voters' voting preferences while those without it, have always continued losing in elections.

According to Hiatt (1998), the influence of money in voting process amongst voters has been highly pronounced to decide who wins the elections. Hiatt explains that in the past years, political aspirants were voted due to their qualities and not because of money as it is in the current days. Hiatt (1998) further explains that in those days of 1920s democracy seemed to work better because it allowed political candidates of high competence and conscience to rise to the highest level of government. He notes that such candidates were elected on a level field by citizens, whose votes counted equally, but today, politics has become an arm's race – but with money, candidates are forced to give money to win elections. Babeiya (2011) concurs with Hiatt by adding that elections in the present days involve a lot of expenditures from politicians; including the extravagantly use of money and other resources planned to manipulate and win elections.

Very interesting, the influence of money during election campaigns in Sub-Saharan Africa does not differ much from other parts of the world. Perhaps the only difference could be the nature and techniques used to give such money. Different from the developed countries, the use and influence of money in voting decisions amongst Sub-Saharan Africa is quite huge (Babeiya, 2011). It is very easy for African elections to determine or predict the winners during elections, this is due to the fact that political parties or candidates who use much money are normally more likely to win elections compared to those who use less or not at all, thus, the more a candidate spends the more likely he or she will win the election and the less he or she spends the least likely he or she will win in that election.

THE SUPREMACY OF ETHNICITY IN ELECTIONS

The word ethnicity has been used in a different perspective by different scholars. Yearley and Bruce (2006) defines the term to refer to a group on the scale of a person or a nation; the members which claim descend from common ancestors and are usually united by a common language, religion, culture and history. On the other hand, Gabsa (2004) defines the term ethnicity as a particular way of life of a given group of people that basically differentiates them from another types or class of people whether within the same territory or beyond. Gabsa adds that cultures, language, and sometimes physical appearance are some of the defining features of an ethnic group.

When discussing the presence and role of ethnicity in Tanzanian elections, let us have an overview of the nature or presence of ethnic groups in Tanzania. The country is suspected to be comprised of about more than 120 ethnic groups among which more than 100 are alleged to be for native Tanzanians (indigenous) and the rest is the Tanzanian's inhabitants comprising Asians, Arabs, and Europeans (Mwidima, 2018).

However, despite the existence of diverse ethnic groups in the country, there have been diverse points of views about the use of ethnicity in politics. The first point of view asserts that Tanzanians politics has been dominated by the use of ethnicity especially during election campaigns and voting decisions whereby prospective voters tend to support contestants from

either their own ethnic group or from their own place of origin. The other point of view believes that despite the availability of diverse ethnic groups, Tanzania does not have politics of ethnicity as compared to other countries. For example, Jerman (1997) categorically states that Tanzania is one of the few African countries which does not rely much on the influence of ethnicity to determine who the winners of an election would be despite the presence of diverse ethnic groups.

On centrally, Lau and Redlawsk (2006) has emphatically confirmed that the use of ethnicity in political competition amongst African countries particularly Tanzania is significantly pronounced. Lau and Redlawsk mentions Kenya as one of the other giant countries in East African where ethnicity is used as a determining factor for politicians to win elections

Meanwhile, the use and influence of ethnicity during election campaigns has not only been pronounced in Tanzania but there are some other giant countries such as the United State of America which has also been reported to have a high level of ethnicity during election campaigns as well as voting decisions amongst prospective voters. Suhay (2008) reports that most of the voters in the United States of America cast their votes based on the ethnicity grounds, especially on colour identity. For example, in 2008 when Americans in Chicago were electing the Mayor, it was witnessed that the voting decisions were dictated and determined by colours. Majority of the blacks voted for the black candidates while the white also cast their votes to the white candidates (Gabriela, 2005). He adds that, in the United State of America, the question of ethnicity, precisely grounded on race is very high especially during political races among candidates. Race voting for states like California is very common, and class identity is used as a major predictor of the strength of race voting. That is, the higher the white voters' class the less likely they are to vote for a Latino, likewise, the Latino in California also vote for Latino candidates. As mentioned earlier that Sub-Saharan African countries are mentioned (Nnabuihe, Aghemalo & Okebugwa, 2014; Adegboyega, 2016) as the leading countries which are dominated by the use of ethnicity during elections and voting decisions. Ethnicity in Nigeria is said to have a huge influence in determining the choices and voting preferences amongst prospective voters. Iwuji (1998) affirms that political parties like NPC in Nigeria and other parties in the country have been dominantly covered by ethnicity objectives especially in the southern party of the country, likewise, the NCNC is a typical Ibo [ethnic group] political party, thus, the Ibo have always been voting for the party than other parties. Adegboyega (2006) and William (2011) explains that several attempts to form nationally integrative political parties in Nigeria have failed, instead, patterns of ethnic politics have sustained, illustrated by ethno-regional political parties, ethnic mobilization as well as ethnic voting.

Other countries mostly reported to be dominated by politics of ethnicity is Russia. It is reported (Bremmer, 1994) that ethnicity classes available in Russia have been determining the voting decisions amongst prospective voters. It is noted that this movement has led to the emergency of class formation in the Russia government whereby the minority ethnic groups have always been the looser in elections because of their small number. According to Bremmer (1994) as cited by Mwidima (2018), the popular ethnic groups in Russia have conquered the administration top positions in the country than the minority ethnic groups because of the benefits of appealing more votes from their own ethnic groups who are numerous in the country. Similarly, Brazil is likewise not left behindhand with the politics of ethnicity. It is reported (Powell, 2011) that voting partialities amid voters in Brazil are significantly predisposed by ethnicity

grounds of voters in relation to the candidates or political parties (Powell, 2011). Powell mentions the Afro-Brazilian population who are the majority and they are over 75 percentages while the black or Preto Brazilian represent a socioeconomically and politically marginal minority, thus, during elections voting, the majority ethnic group have normally been winning the elections.

Other Sub-Saharan African countries struck by ethnicity in their elections are Zimbabwe and Cameroun. Starting with Zimbabwe, the power of ethnicity has always been used as a determining factor in predicting winners of elections in the region (Dewa, 2009). Dewa explains that ethnicity in Zimbabwe is mainly based on race just similar to South Africa where the blacks prefer voting for the black candidates whereas the white also prefers voting for the white candidates. On the other hand, in Cameroun as Gabsa (2004) and Beyene (2012) reports, voting decisions during election periods is influenced and determined by ethnicity settings. This has led the country to continuously be led by the majority ethnic groups while the small or minority groups have always been occupying the low positions in the country because they cannot put in power their people due to their being small in numbers.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The existing literature (Babeiya 2011) indicate that money politics and ethnicity in Tanzanian's elections is significantly high especially during election campaigns. However, despite all these facts, there is scant literature on the influence of both money politics and ethnicity towards voting decisions amongst prospective voters in the country. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the influence of money politics vis-à-vis ethnicity in the voting decisions amongst prospective voters in Tanzania. In other words, what is the influence of money politics towards voting decisions in Tanzanian's election compared to that of ethnicity?

METHOD

This is qualitative research which used six Focus Group Discussions to collect the data whereby three of the groups were done in the rural areas and the rest were done from the urban areas of Nyamagana and Ilemela districts in Mwanza region. The three groups in the rural area were moderated by the first researcher whereas the second researcher moderated the three groups in the urban area. The level of education of participants ranged from primary education (30%), secondary education (33%), and postsecondary schools (37%). All the six Focus Group Discussions comprised of 12 participants.

To identify and select the participants who participated in the six Focus Group Discussions, purposive sampling technique was used as suggested by Jamilah, Normah and Mohd Nor Shahizan (2019). Since the study was interested in getting opinions of active voters in the elections, the researchers used the local leaders to identify, select and organise appointments and venues for the discussions. During the discussions in every group, every participant was required to register his or her personal particulars as prepared by the researchers so as to know their basic demographic characteristics. All the six Focus Group Discussions were moderated by the two researchers and they lasted for between two to three hours.

During the discussions, the researchers used tape recorders and notebooks to record and note down all important points said by the participants. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data gotten from the Focus Group Discussions. Thematic analysis is a process of encoding

qualitative information. Thematic analysis is the best in scrutinizing and reporting patterns and themes within qualitative data, thus, the choice of this data analysis method was considered suitable and relevant for this study. Likewise, this approach has been described as one of the most common approaches to qualitative data analysis (Bryant, 2009).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The focus of this study was to examine the influence of money politics towards voting decisions in relation to ethnicity in Tanzania. Specifically, the study sought to determine whether money politics and ethnicity would have any significant influence on voting decisions amongst prospective voters in Tanzania. The findings reveal that both money politics and ethnicity have a significant influence on voting decisions in Tanzania though ethnicity has slightly more influence than money politics. The majority (54%) of participants across the six Focus Group Discussions confirmed to have cast their votes in the 2015 election basing on ethnicity while the rest (46%) of the participants said to have cast their votes to the candidates who gave them something. The findings further reveal that participants who confirmed to have cast their votes based on ethnicity, a majority (57%) of them said to have done so because the candidates they voted for were from their own tribe while the rest (43%) claimed to have done so because the candidates were from their place of origin (geographical proximity).

Moreover, the findings disclose that majority of participants who cast their votes because of money politics confirmed to have done so because they were given money (23%), free transport and lunch (17%), and free gifts (60%). The free gifts given included the distributions of salt (9%), caps (28%), matchbox (11), mobile phones (3%), clothes/Khanga (37%), sugar (8), and others (4). It was revealed that politicians used their agents and local leaders to distribute the money and all the above-listed items at their home places during night hours (70%) while some of the money and those items were distributed at the campaign venues (30%).

In comparing the overall findings, the responses suggest that ethnicity has a greater opportunity in predicting the outcome of an election in Tanzania compared to money politics. The results further suggest that a candidate from the majority ethnic groups or voters from the same place of origin (geographical proximity) is an added advantage for such a candidate to win an election compared to a candidate from the minority ethnic group. However, though money politics seem to be overwhelmed by ethnicity in influencing the voting decisions amongst voters in Tanzania, but its effects can never be ignored nor overlooked. This is because of the fact that participants who confirmed to have been influenced by money politics are quite enough to cause any effects in an election due to the facts that people who receive money from politicians have often been so committed and loyal in their voting decisions, this fact is confirmed by Babeiya (2011).

Moreover, the findings reveal that money politics has more influence on women's voting decisions than on men. Likewise, ethnicity has more influence on men compared to their counterpart women. It was observed that majority (63%) of participants who cast their votes to the candidates who gave them money or some free gifts were women whereas the majority (57%) of participants who cast their votes based on ethnicity were men. The followings are the words of a 54 age-old woman who represents the other women:

I am a widow; my husband passed away and left me with a big family. I admit having cast my vote to the candidate who helped me with some money which I used to buy school uniforms and shoes for my granddaughter who is also an orphan. There were no reasons that could force me not voting for this candidate because I was sure he would give me more helps after winning the election". She adds that "sometimes politicians help us to pay tuition fees to our children, so I respect a person who gives me money during elections because it helps me solve my family problems.

The practical implications of these findings are that there is a minimal and slight difference in the influence of money politics and ethnicity towards voting decisions in Tanzania. In other words, both money politics and ethnicity can cause effects in the voting decisions amongst voters. However, it can be established by these findings that if a candidate invests much on women during election periods than on men, such a candidate is more likely to get more votes from women compared to a candidate who invests more on men. Likewise, if a candidate propagates considerable ethnicity campaigns towards men during election periods in Tanzania, then such a candidate is more likely to get more votes from men than from women.

What surprises more in these findings is that the distributions of clothes/Khanga have appeared to be more pronounced (38%) to influence the voting decisions of women than the distribution of money/cash (23%). In other words, politicians who rely on money politics in Tanzania and want to win or get more votes in an election, are ought to distribute more clothes to the voters especially women than giving them money (cash). The implication here could be that the durability of money is normally fragile compared to clothes. This is because, during the discussions with participants, it was observed that some women were still wearing clothes/Khanga and caps which they were given in the past elections. To confirm this, the words of a class seven-woman (47 years) represent the voices of other participants:

I like candidates who give us clothes especially Khanga, this is because we stay with these clothes for a long time. Above all, these clothes help us to cover in the nights because I don't have bedsheets. For example, this Khanga (clothes) I am wearing; were given to me in the last general election (in 2010) more than five years now, but my husband who was given ten thousand cash on the same day used that money to buy alcohol and was left with nothing, so that is why I cannot betray candidates who give me clothes, I will continue voting for them in the coming elections.

In nutshell, these findings have continued to establish that ethnicity still has some effects in the voting decisions amongst voters and can still predict an outcome of voting trends of an election in Tanzania as Hazarak (2015), Ginsberg (2009), Whatman (2009) with Maizatul, Wan Idros and Wan Amizah (2019) have confirmed. Likewise, the findings suggest that the use of money politics also still hold water in determining winners of an election or can predict the voting trends in Tanzania as Gabsa (2004), Lau and Redlawsk (2006), Suhay (2008) with Nurul Naemah, Syed Agil and Akmar Hayati (2019) have reported. The only uniqueness of these findings is that

the study has somewhat managed to distinguish the power of money politics against ethnicity in voting decisions in Tanzania.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that ethnicity still has significant influence in the voting decisions and preferences amongst prospective voters in Tanzania, hence; it is likely that most of the voters in Tanzania prefer voting for candidates from their own tribes, same origin, or candidates from same geographical location (geographic proximity) (Mus Chairil & Guri, 2019). Therefore, candidates from the majority ethnic group in Tanzania are likely to continue gaining more votes from men than candidates from the minority groups. However, the influence of money politics cannot be over sighted as well. This is because money politics has more influence on women (63%) than on men, and since the rate of voter turnout of women has always been higher than that of men, then, their influence in predicting the results of an election in Tanzania is significantly high. Moreover, it can also be concluded that poverty amongst women is an accelerating factor to why they are more lured with money politics in their voting decisions compared to men. The distribution of clothes, sugar, salt, match boxes, free lunch and the like gifts during elections are just a few indicators of poverty facing voters in Tanzania of which politicians use such weakness for their political gains. Lastly, in order to further explore the voting trends in Tanzania, future researchers may expand this research by making a comparative study amongst the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, Sudan, and Rwanda. This would help to enlighten the readers about the country with high influence of money politics and ethnicity in their voting decisions.

BIODATA

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