



Strategic Human Resources Management and Multinational Strategic Management as Core Topics in Strategic Management: Rapid Review Results

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Abstract

The presented paper is merely theoretical and deals with the issue of the most popular recent topics in the world of strategic management. The methodology applied in the proposed paper is based upon the advanced rapid review technique. As the classification criterium, the authors have used the citation score of Web of Science in the PICOS frame. The main objective of the paper is to find out the most attractive and popular recent theories of world strategic management and discover whether they focus mostly on the business performance of different types of organizations. The presented paper includes literature review, applied methodology description as well as the most important research findings accompanied with commented charts, tables and discussion. The most important finding pointed out that business performance is not the explicit primary goal of the most cited paper, although this topic occurs twice among the most cited dozens of papers. Most popular topics in the top cited dozen topics are strategic human resources management as well as multinational (international) strategic management with three occurrences of the focus in the most cited dozen.

Keywords: Strategic management, recent theory, citation score, rapid review, Web of Science.

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Introduction

Strategic management is respected as the royal discipline of management and as well as other management branches is quickly developing addressing new problems and challenges. There arises a remarkable question for students of management, management practitioners and expert public, asking what the most popular and interesting topics and theories in strategic management discipline in the recent time are. There are many ways of how to analyze and answer this question and we have chosen the rapid review technique as the appropriate tool to provide the answer.

The process of the presented paper formation was composed from the following steps: (1) formulation of research needs and aim, (2) basic theoretical research on strategic management, (3) finding of the appropriate methodology, (4) formulation of PICOS frame, (5) realization of advanced rapid review, (7) synthesis and conclusion. The content of the paper is fully in tune with the focus of the Journal of Organizational Management Studies on applied research, case studies, best practices, and experiences in Management Science.

Aim of the paper

The primary aim of the paper is to find out what are the most attractive and popular recent theories of world strategic management (evaluated by the citations) and discover whether they focus mostly on the business performance of different types of organizations. Kozel et al. e.g., focused on innovative company management based on measuring company performance. The authors measured performance using the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) method. The output was an innovative design of perspectives for industrial companies (Kozel et al, 2017).

Theory, Literature Review and Research Questions

Strategic management is defined as the management of an organization's resources to achieve its goals and objectives. Strategic management involves setting objectives, analyzing the competitive environment, analyzing the internal organization, evaluating strategies, and ensuring that management rolls out the strategies across the organization (Kenton et al, 2021). From the point of view of turbulent time, knowledge of the internal environment seems to be an absolute necessity, without which no organization can operate on the market for a long time. On the other hand, the emphasis on constant, continuous monitoring of the external environment and thorough analysis of key environmental factors appears to be an essential element of the strategic management process (Navratilova, 2021). Nag et al suggest that strategic management's success as a field emerges from an underlying consensus that enables it to attract multiple perspectives, while still maintaining its coherent distinctiveness (Nag et al, 2007).

Strategic Management Theories and Trends

Classical strategic management theories according to McGratt et al fall into the following areas: how to lead and manage people, how to motivate staff, coaching, building, and managing teams, organizational culture, change-management, strategic planning, decision making, quality, exercising authority, power and influence. Among the well-known theories of strategic management, we can locate: The seven stages of strategic planning, The Boston Consulting Group matrix model, Johnson, Scholes and Wittingham's stakeholder mapping theory, Porter's five forces theory, SWOT and PEST, Taleb's Black Swan events or Scenario

planning (McGratt, Bates, 2015). Modern management methods and tools are utilized in companies in different clusters, and tools connected with strategic plan are the ones of the most important management tools' group (Pawliczek et al, 2013, 2015). At the same time, modern tools of strategic management provide feedback through settled key performance indicators e.g., method BSC (Peterková and Franek, 2018).

Literature Review Types

Methodological approaches to the synthesis of information from available sources vary, and new methods that meet various research objectives are constantly emerging, including evidence mapping, concept analysis, quick reviews, and more. Such a modern method can be for example multiagent approach and modeling (Zimmermannová and Čermák,

2014). Choosing the right approach may not be straightforward. In selecting an appropriate approach to the review, researchers may appreciate expert advice from bibliographic methodologists, statisticians, and information specialists to ensure that the chosen methods are appropriate for the objectives of the review (Curtin University Library, 2020).

The table below (Table 1) characterizes the differences between a systematic review, literature review, scoping overview, and rapid review. Rapid reviews have proven to be a suitable simplified approach to the synthesis of materials and evidence – usually to obtain information for urgent decisions faced by managers (e.g., in management and healthcare).

Table 1: Comparison of the literature review types

	Systematic Review	Literature Review	Scoping Review	Rapid Review
Question	Focused on one research question with narrow parameters (PICOS framework)	Not necessarily focused on one question, but can be an overview	Research question is often broad	Narrow question (can use PICOS framework)
Protocol	Includes protocol or peer review plan	No protocol included		
The essence (What is it?)	Provides a summary of available literature on the topic Identifies, evaluates, and synthesizes all empirical evidence that meets predetermined eligibility criteria to answer a given research question	Provides a summary of available literature on a given topic	Quick collection of literature on the field to provide an overview of the type, scope, and amount of available research (resources)	
Objectives	Clear objectives are set	Objectives may or may not be identified		
Eligibility: selection criteria	Criteria are listed before the overview is carried out	Criteria are not specified	Inclusion / exclusion can be developed post hoc	Based on consistently applied criteria

(inclusion / exclusion)				
Search strategy	Explicit strategy, comprehensive search performed systematically	The strategy is not explicitly stated		Explicit strategy, but resources may be limited
Article selection process	The process is usually clear and explicit, focused on quality resources.	Not described in the literature search.	Studies of all types, incl. non-standard sources of information	
Article evaluation process	Comprehensive study of quality	Study quality evaluation may or may not be included	Optional	
Results and data synthesis	Clear (qualitative) study summaries based on high quality evidence. May include a meta-analysis	Summary based on studies for which it is not possible to specify the quality of the articles. It can also be influenced by the reviewer's theories, needs and beliefs	Usually, descriptive summary	Descriptive summary / data categorization
Discussion	Written by an expert or group of experts with detailed and well-founded knowledge of the issue	Written by experts with well-founded knowledge of the issue		
Why to choose this method?	To address a clearly focused issue by searching for the best available, relevant studies and synthesizing the results		Research gap identification: it is sometimes used as a precursor to a systematic review	
Assessment	Thorough critical evaluation incl. study quality evaluation		Evaluation can be variable; typically, not performed, or may be embodied in descriptive form	
Conclusions	Formal synthesis of the finding based on evidence		Literature review and resulting general topics based on facts	Limited / careful interpretation of findings

(Source: Authors' own processing upon the Curtin University Library, 2020)

The following research questions regarding the most attractive and popular recent theories of world strategic management have been formulated:

- RQ1: Does the performance of business prevail as the dominant topic in the dozen of the most cited papers?
- RQ2: Has any author published more than one paper in the most cited dozen?

Research Methodology

The chapter characterizes the research methodology applied in the paper.

Research Goal

The primary goal of the paper is to establish the most attractive and popular recent theories of world strategic management and find out whether they focus on the business performance of different types of organizations. The secondary goal of the paper is to answer formulated research questions.

Sample, Data Collection and Analyses

Theoretical data collection is based upon advanced rapid review with the application of systematic review principles in the following characteristics: protocol, objectives, article selection and evaluation, discussion, and assessment.

1. Question: Narrow question (PICOS framework can be used)
 - 1.1. Problem: What are the most attractive and popular recent theories of world strategic management?
 - 1.2. Investigated condition: Most cited papers in the Web of Science
 - 1.3. Comparison condition: Focus of the topics of the papers

1.4. Outcome: Synthetic table

1.5. Study type: Theoretical study based upon the advanced rapid review

2. Protocol: Includes protocol or peer review plan

2.1. Double blind peer review is assured by the IBIMA conference editorial system

3. The essence (What is it?): Quick (limited) collection of literature on the field to provide an overview of the type, scope, and amount of available research (resources)

4. Objectives: Clear objectives are set

5. Eligibility: Based on consistently applied criteria

6. Search strategy: Explicit strategy, but resources may be limited

6.1. Keywords: Strategic management theory

6.2. Field: Title

7. Article selection process: The process is usually clear and explicit, focused on quality resources.

7.1. Twelve most cited papers

8. Article evaluation process: Study quality evaluation may or may not be included (optional)

8.1. Database Search: The Web of Science

9. Results and data synthesis: Descriptive summary / data categorization

10. Discussion: Written by experts with well-founded knowledge of the issue

11. Why choosing this method? To address a clearly focused issue by searching for the best available, relevant studies and synthesizing the results

12. Assessment: Thorough critical evaluation incl. study quality evaluation

12.1. Critical evaluation of the study is guaranteed by double blind peer review system

13. Conclusions: Limited / careful interpretation of findings

Analyses, Results and Discussion

The chapter characterizes the most important research results.

Citation Report

The following figure (fig. 1) characterizes the citation report of the “strategic management theory” according to the search strategy described above. We can clearly see that the branch has been developing since 1980 with rapid acceleration after 2005. The total number of papers with the “strategic management theory” in their title is 134 which are 6,274 times cited. The H index of researched sentence is 33. The highest number of annual publications was 13 in the year 2018 and the number of citations reached 762 in the year 2021. The most recent numbers for 2022 are not known yet.

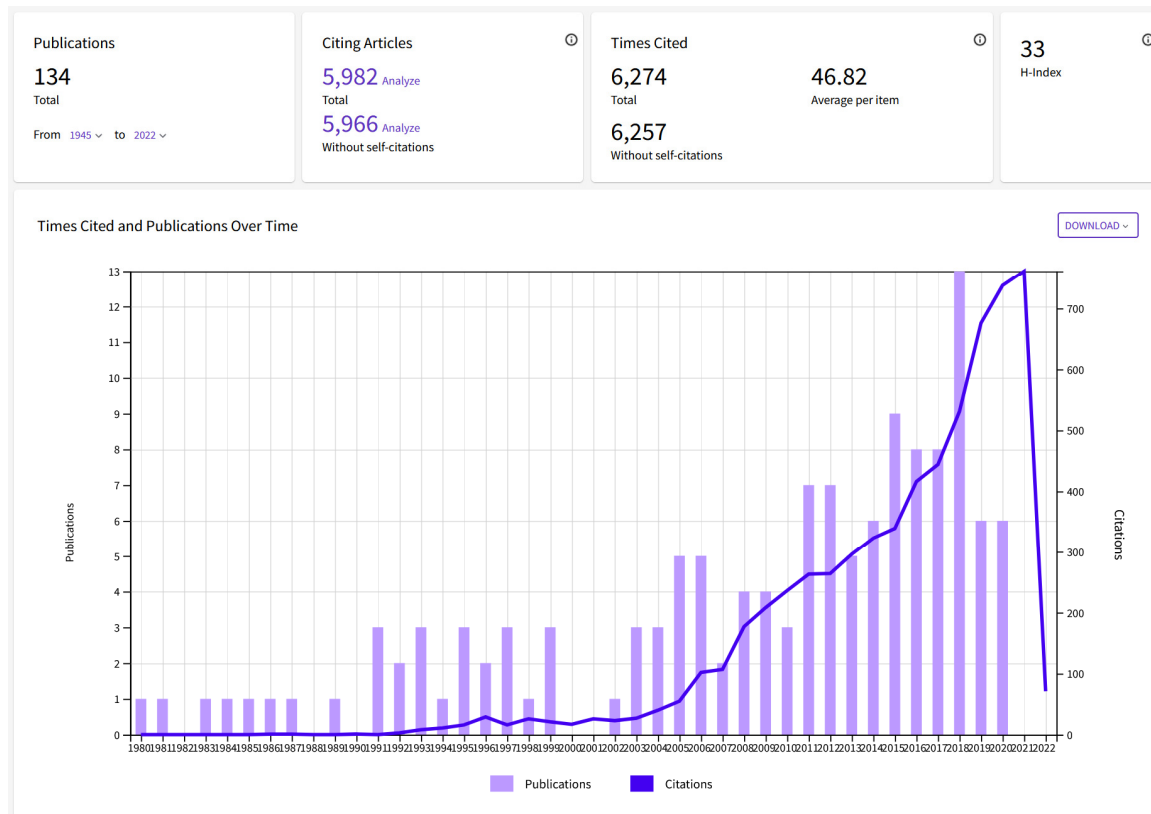


Fig.1: Citation report for Strategic management theory in Title

(Source: Web of Science, retrieved 7.2.2022)

Twelve most cited papers

The most cited paper by Schot et al discusses the empirical findings and conceptual elaborations of the last 10 years in strategic niche management research (SNM). The SNM approach suggests that sustainable innovation journeys can be facilitated by creating technological niches, i.e., protected spaces that allow the experimentation with the co-evolution of technology, user practices, and regulatory structures. The assumption was that if such niches were constructed appropriately, they would act as building blocks for broader societal changes towards sustainable development. The article shows how concepts and ideas have evolved over time and new complexities were introduced. The research focused on the role of various niche-internal processes such as learning, networking, visioning, and the relations between local projects and global rule sets that guide actor behavior. The empirical findings showed that the analysis of these niche-internal dimensions needed to be complemented with attention to niche external processes. In this respect, the multi-level perspective proved to be useful for contextualizing SNM. This contextualization led to modifications in claims about the dynamics of sustainable innovation journeys. Niches are to be perceived as crucial for bringing about regime shifts, but they cannot do this on their own. Linkages with ongoing external processes are also important. Although substantial insights have been gained, the SNM approach is still an unfinished research program. The authors identify various promising research directions, as well as policy implications (Schot et al, 2008, p. 537).

Chrisman et al provide in their paper a review of important trends in the strategic management approach to studying family firms: convergence in definitions, accumulating evidence that family involvement may affect performance, and the emergence of agency theory and the resource-based view of the firm, as the

leading theoretical perspectives. They conclude by discussing directions for future research and other promising approaches to inform the inquiry concerning family business (Chrisman et al, 2005, p. 555).

The development of the field of strategic management, according to Hoskisson et al, within the last two decades has been dramatic. While its roots have been in a more applied area, often referred to as business policy, the current field of strategic management is strongly theoretical based on substantial empirical research and is eclectic in its nature. This review of the development of the field and its current position examines the field's early development and the primary theoretical and methodological bases through its history. Early developments include Chandler's (1962) *Strategy and Structure* and Ansoff's (1965) *Corporate Strategy*. These early works have their roots on the contingency perspective (fit between strategy and structure) and a resource-based framework emphasizing internal strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps, one of the most significant contributions to the development of strategic management came from industrial organization (IO) economics, specifically the work of Michael Porter. The structure-conduct-performance framework and the notion of strategic groups, as well as providing a foundation for research on competitive dynamics, are currently flourishing. The IO paradigm also brought econometric tools to the research on strategic management. Building on the IO economics framework, the organizational economics perspective contributed transaction costs economics and agency theory to strategic management. More recent theoretical contributions focus on the resource-based view of the firm. While it has its roots in Edith Penrose's work in the late 1950s, the resource-based view was largely introduced to the field of strategic management in the 1980s and became a dominant framework in the 1990s. Based on the resource-based view or developing

concurrently were research on strategic leadership, strategic decision theory (process research), and knowledge-based view of the firm conducted. The research methodologies are becoming increasingly sophisticated and now frequently combine both quantitative and qualitative approaches and unique and new statistical tools. Finally, this review examines the future directions, both in terms of theory and methodologies, as the study of strategic management evolves (Hoskisson et al, 1999, p. 417).

Snell's study examined the relations between strategic context, viewed in terms of product-market variation, workflow integration, and firm size, and executive use of human resource management control systems, including input, behavior, and output controls. The data from executives in 102 firms showed the following: a positive relationship between product-market variation and the use of behavior control, mediated by the presence of managers' knowledge of cause-effect relations and the crystallization of standards of desirable performance; a negative relationship between work flow integration and behavior and output control, mediated by crystallization of performance standards; and a positive relationship between firm size and input control that is independent of administrative information. These results are discussed in terms of theory development and future research in strategic human resource management (Snell, 1992, p. 292).

Colbert considers the implications for research and practice in strategic human resource management (SHRM) of a complex, living-systems extension of the resource-based view (RBV). He does so by demonstrating that concepts from complexity align well with the RBV, and he extends the RBV by considering critical but difficult aspects commonly identified in the RBV strategy literature. An integrated framework for SHRM is presented, allowing the application of complexity principles at

the appropriate level of abstraction in the HR system (Colbert, 2004, p. 341).

The paper by Rungman et al assesses the continued relevance of Buckley and Casson's (1976) book *The Future of the Multinational Enterprise* (MNE), against a background of increasing criticism of transaction-cost-related scholarly work. They demonstrate that the 'schism' that can currently be observed in the field between international business and international management is misguided, as the transaction cost/internalization school may offer useful insights to both management scholars and managers. For this to occur, however, it is necessary first to extend the empirical scope of transaction-cost-based reasoning to include the functioning of differentiated network MNEs. The paper suggests that Buckley and Casson's book still represents a beacon of clarity and a superb starting point for the study of the MNE, even if the complexity of this governance structure has grown far beyond what any international business scholar or even international management scholar could have predicted 25 years ago (Rugman et al, 2003, p. 125).

Rungman et al further assess the extent to which the results of Bartlett and Ghoshal's (1989) work can be incorporated in what has now become one of the core explanations of multinational strategic management, i.e., the transaction cost-based theory of international production. They demonstrate that the transaction cost approach fully incorporates the empirical findings of Bartlett and Ghoshal's work. To do so requires that they make a new distinction between location-bound and non-location-bound firm-specific advantages. In addition, three possible uses of country-specific advantages by multinational enterprises have been identified. While the transnational solution, as proposed by Bartlett and Ghoshal, is not itself a new theory of multinational strategic management, it is compatible with the transaction cost-based

model of multinational strategic management (Rugman et al, 1992, p. 761).

In his essay, Doh discusses the implications of the debate over offshoring for our collective understanding of international business and management theories. Doh reviews several core theories in international business expansion and management strategy to assess which elements of these theories may need to be respecified in light of the offshoring phenomenon and which aspects remain relevant. He then presents normative implications and recommendations for public policy and corporate strategy, drawing from emerging insights regarding the global responsibilities of corporations. He suggests that international labor and environmental standards and corporate codes of conduct could mitigate some of the most intense concerns raised about offshoring but concludes that offshoring is likely to present challenges to societies, corporations, and stakeholders for many decades (Doh, 2005, p. 695).

Ackerman's article explores how top management teams can increase the robustness of their strategies by attending to important concepts emerging from the stakeholder literature. Analysis of three themes emanating from this literature leads to the development of a method composed of three techniques which elaborates how stakeholder management concepts can be applied in practice. The research, which spanned over a 15-year time period, was based on working with 16 top management teams while they were developing their strategies, so that the method which developed incrementally in response to the teams' reactions to its utility was grounded in both theory and practice (Ackerman, 2011, p. 179).

The paper of Milliman et al seeks to extend our understanding of congruence of "fit" theory in strategic human resource management (HRM) as a result of developing an organizational life cycle (OLC) model of international HRM (IHRM) for multinational companies (MNCs). International and longitudinal dimensions provide several contributions to congruence theory as it relates to IHRM. First, two additional IHRM-context fits should be considered in strategic human resources. Second, the need for flexibility in strategic IHRM is explored in greater detail. Next, the concepts of fit and flexibility are explored in complement by examining their relationship over the entire OLC. A series of propositions has been formulated concerning the relationship of fit and flexibility to organizational effectiveness in MNCs. Finally, new research directions are suggested relating fit to flexibility over the OLC for different organizational and environmental contexts (Milliman et al, 1991, p. 318).

Actors within organizations commonly must make choices armed with incomplete and asymmetrically distributed information. Signalling theory seeks to explain how individuals are able to do so. This theory's primary predictive mechanism is separating equilibrium, which occurs when a signal's expectations are confirmed through experience. A content analysis finds that most strategic management signalling theory studies have not fully leveraged separating equilibrium. This presents two possible paths for future research. First, some researchers may wish to incorporate separating equilibrium. We illustrate how doing so can uncover new relationships, generate novel insights, and fortify the theory's application. Others who want to theorize about signals, but not examine separating equilibrium, could integrate ideas from signalling theory with other information perspectives. Here a signal becomes one stimulus among many that corporate actors interpret and act upon. We provide research agendas so strategy

scholars can apply signalling theory most effectively to meet their research objectives (Bergh et al, 2014).

Snow et al discuss in their paper the contributions that field methods have made to the theory-development process in strategic management. Field studies drawn from the literature are classified according to their research goal (description, explanation, or prediction) and according to whether they built or tested theory. The overall conclusion is that field research methods will continue to be used heavily to develop strategy theory. However, certain conditions must be met to maximize the contribution of field methods to strategy research. These conditions include a balanced research agenda, multifaceted research approaches, innovative data gathering techniques, and an applied futuristic orientation (Snow et al, 2007, p. 457).

Synthetic Table

Following table 2, it synthetically summarizes the above introduced most cited papers and characterizes what topics are most frequently focused. Most popular topics in the top cited dozen topics are strategic human resources management as well as multinational (international) strategic management with three occurrences of the focus. Further are topics rather isolated. One paper focuses on strategic niche in the context of innovative sustainability, another on family firms' performance, next at stakeholder concepts and another on signalling theory and equilibrium. Two papers focus on methodological concepts: one on the development of the branch and the other on field methods (case studies). We see that the most numerous are the authors Rungman et al. focusing twice on multinational strategic management and transaction costs.

Table 2: Synthetic table of most cited studies focused on different theories of strategic management

Paper title/ theory	Author	Year of publishing	Times cited	Topic focus
Strategic niche management and sustainable innovation journeys: theory, findings, research agenda, and policy	Schot et al	2008	910	Strategic niche management, sustainable innovation
Trends and directions in the development of a strategic management theory of the family firm	Chrisman et al	2005	600	Family firm, performance, agency theory
Theory and research in strategic management: Swings of a pendulum	Hoskisson et al	1999	496	Branch development overview
Control-theory in strategic human-resources management - the mediating effect of administrative information	Snell	1992	378	Strategic human resource management, control theory
The complex resource-based view: Implications for theory and practice in strategic human resource management	Colbert	2004	345	Strategic human resource management, resource-based view

Extending the theory of the multinational enterprise: internalization and strategic management perspectives	Rugman et al	2003	312	Multinational strategic management, transaction costs
A note on the transnational solution and the transaction cost theory of multinational strategic management	Rugman et al	1992	290	Multinational strategic management, transaction costs
Offshore outsourcing: Implications for international business and strategic management theory and practice	Doh	2005	244	International business and management, offshoring
Strategic management of stakeholders: theory and practice	Ackerman et al	2011	193	Stakeholder management concepts
Organizational life cycles and strategic international human-resource management in multinational companies - implications for congruence theory	Milliman et al	1991 (oldest)	183	Strategic human resources management, "fit" theory
Signalling Theory and Equilibrium in Strategic Management Research: An Assessment and a Research Agenda	Bergh et al	2014 (newest)	145	Signalling theory and equilibrium
Field-research methods in strategic management - contributions to theory building and testing	Snow et al	2007	138	Field methods

(Source: Authors' own processing on the base of Web of Science, retrieved 7.2.2022)

Based on previous table 2, we can answer and clarify the research question (RQ1), does the performance of business prevail as the dominant topic in the dozen of most cited papers? No, business performance is not the explicit primary goal of the most cited papers, although this topic occurs twice among the most cited dozens of papers. Business performance is, however, very often addressed even if it is not the focus of the research paper. The research question (RQ2), if any author has published more than one paper in the most cited dozen, can be answered: yes, two papers by the authors Rungman et al are focused on multinational strategic management and transaction costs.

Conclusion

The presented theoretical paper deals with the most popular recent topics in the world of strategic management. The methodology is based upon the advanced rapid review technique. As the classification criterium, authors have used the citation score of the Web of Science in the PICOS frame. The main objective of the paper is to find out the most attractive and popular recent theories of world strategic management and whether they focus mostly on the business performance of different types of organizations. Two research questions were set and evaluated. The presented paper includes literature review, applied methodology description as well as the most important research findings accompanied

with commented charts, tables and discussion. The most important findings discovered that business performance is not the explicit primary goal of the most cited papers, although this topic occurs twice among the most cited dozen of papers. The most popular topics in the top cited dozen topics are strategic human resources

management as well as multinational (international) strategic management with three occurrences of the focus in the most cited dozen. The aim of the paper was fulfilled. The major benefit of the paper for managers and practitioners is the inspiration what topics in the organization could be possibly addressed to obtain better performance or positive change of state in the strategic management.

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