


ANTHROPOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE: RESOURCES FOR LEARNING



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DEVELOPED BY: THE CAIRNS LAB

An aerial photograph of a dense, lush green forest. A multi-lane road with white lane markings and arrows is visible in the middle ground, cutting through the trees. The text is overlaid on the upper portion of the image.

"Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies."

- UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
[HTTPS://WWW.EPA.GOV/ENVIRONMENTALJUSTICE](https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice)

Curricula and Syllabi

The Curricular Guide for Environmental Justice

Developed by the Council on Social Work Education, this guide for faculty and supervisors highlights the importance of and techniques for integrating environmental justice into curricula.

Selected Environmental Justice Syllabi

Compiled by Seattle University's Center for Environmental Justice and Sustainability, this list offers collected syllabi from environmental justice coursework from around the country.

Teaching Environmental Justice and Intersectionality in Our Classrooms

Created by the NAACP, the Environmental Justice Classroom Resource Guide provides webpages, lesson plans, songs, and videos for educators.

Environmental Justice Education

We Act provides environmental justice education for both adults and youth, including their flagship Environmental Health and Justice Leadership Training, online learning modules, classroom visits, and workshops.

Citation Matters: An Updated Reading List for a Progressive Environmental Anthropology

This reading list offers a critical, anthropological lens on issues relating to humans and the environment, with the goal of forwarding undercited scholars and highlighting intersectional perspectives

Books

***A Terrible Thing to Waste: Environmental Racism and Its Assault on the American Mind* by Harriet A. Washington**

A "powerful and indispensable" look at the devastating consequences of environmental racism (Gerald Markowitz) -- and what we can do to remedy its toxic effects on marginalized communities.

***As Long as Grass Grows: The Indigenous Fight for Environmental Justice, from Colonization to Standing Rock* by Dina Gilio-Whitaker**

Through the unique lens of "Indigenized environmental justice," Indigenous researcher and activist Dina Gilio-Whitaker explores the fraught history of treaty violations, struggles for food and water security, and protection of sacred sites, while highlighting the important leadership of Indigenous women in this centuries-long struggle.

***Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors* by Carolyn Finney**

Finney looks beyond the discourse of the environmental justice movement to examine how the natural environment has been understood, commodified, and represented by both white and black Americans. Bridging the fields of environmental history, cultural studies, critical race studies, and geography, Finney argues that the legacies of slavery, Jim Crow, and racial violence have shaped cultural understandings of the "great outdoors" and determined who should and can have access to natural spaces.

***Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States* by Carl A. Zimring**

This book tells the history of the corrosive idea that whites are clean and those who are not white are dirty. From the age of Thomas Jefferson to the Memphis Public Workers strike of 1968 through the present day, ideas about race and waste have shaped where people have lived, where people have worked, and how American society's wastes have been managed.

***Climate Change from the Streets: How Conflict and Collaboration Strengthen the Environmental Justice Movement* by Michael Méndez**

Michael Méndez tells a timely story of people, place, and power in the context of climate change and inequality. He explores the perspectives and influence low 'income people of color bring to their advocacy work on climate change.

Books

***From the Ground Up: Environmental Racism and the Rise of the Environmental Justice Movement* by Luke W. Cole and Sheila R. Foster**

Tracing the roots of the environmental justice movement, Luke Cole and Sheila Foster combine long-time activism with powerful storytelling to provide gripping case studies of communities across the US—towns like Kettleman City, California; Chester, Pennsylvania; and Dilkon, Arizona—and their struggles against corporate polluters.

***Green Wars: Conservation and Decolonization in the Maya Forest* by Megan Ybarra**

In this ethnography of conservation and reforestation efforts in Guatemala's , Megan Ybarra explores how conservation efforts have contributed to the racialized dispossession of Q'eqchi residents, offering a critical examination of the consequences of conservation and the need for accountability in environmental programs.

***Indigenous Environmental Justice* edited by Karen Jarratt-Snider and Marianne O. Nielsen**

Through a series of essays, this book explores the ongoing effects of colonization and emphasizes Native American tribes as governments rather than ethnic minorities. Combining elements of legal issues, human rights issues, and sovereignty issues, *Indigenous Environmental Justice* creates a clear example of community resilience in the face of corporate greed and state indifference.

***Latinx Environmentalisms: Place, Justice, and the Decolonial* by Sarah D. Wald, David J. Vazquez, Priscilla Solis Ybarra, and Sarah Jaquette Ray**

Building on insights of environmental justice scholarship as well as critical race and ethnic studies, the editors and contributors to *Latinx Environmentalisms* map the ways Latinx cultural texts integrate environmental concerns with questions of social and political justice.

***Poisoned Water: How the Citizens of Flint, Michigan, Fought for Their Lives and Warned the Nation* by Candy J. Cooper and Marc Aronson**

Through interviews with residents and intensive research into legal records and news accounts, journalist Candy J. Cooper, assisted by writer-editor Marc Aronson, reveals the true story of Flint. *Poisoned Water* shows not just how the crisis unfolded in 2014, but also the history of racism and segregation that led up to it, the beliefs and attitudes that fueled it, and how the people of Flint fought—and are still fighting—for clean water and healthy lives.

Books

***Race, Place & the Environmental Justice After Hurricane Katrina* by Robert D. Bullard and Beverly Wright**

This book uses the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as a lens for discussing the racial disparities that exist in disaster response, cleanup, rebuilding, reconstruction, and recovery.

***Unearthing Justice: Protecting Your Community from the Mining Industry* by Joan Kuyek**

Unearthing Justice exposes the mining process and its externalized impacts on the environment, Indigenous Peoples, communities, workers, and governments. But, most importantly, the book shows how people are fighting back.

***Unequal Protection: Environmental Justice and Communities of Color* by Robert D. Bullard**

This book shows in case after case how environmental laws have been inconsistently applied, so that people of color suffer disproportionately from public health hazards. It describes how abuses have flourished for lack of government action and organized resistance, and documents the strategies and struggles of grassroots groups now building coalitions among community activists and traditional environmentalists.

***Whose Water Is It, Anyway? Taking Water Protection into Public Hands* by Maude Barlow**

Renowned water justice activist Maude Barlow recounts her own education in water issues as she and her fellow grassroots water warriors woke up to the immense pressures facing water in a warming world. Concluding with a step-by-step guide to making your own community blue.

Looking for course textbooks? *The Routledge Handbook of Environmental Justice* includes chapters well-suited to teaching and is rich in ethnographic, anthropological case studies. Seattle University's Center for Environmental Justice and Sustainability has compiled a list of course textbooks commonly used in environmental justice coursework, available at <https://www.seattleu.edu/cejs/what-you-can-do/ej-teaching-resources/ej-course-textbooks/>

Journal Articles

Barron, Melanie. **"Remediating a sense of place: memory and environmental justice in Anniston, Alabama."** *Southeastern Geographer* 57, no. 1 (2017): 62-79.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26367643>

This article explores PCB remediation efforts in Anniston, Alabama following massive pollution caused by The Monsanto Company. Drawing specific attention to the Black neighborhoods and Black lives that bear the brunt of this pollution, Barron examines how remediation efforts erase both Black lives and the violence of the past.

Bick, Rachel, Erika Halsey, and Christine C. Ekenga. **"The global environmental injustice of fast fashion."** *Environmental Health* 17, no. 1 (2018): 92.

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12940-018-0433-7>

This paper examines the global environmental justice dilemma posted by the fast fashion supply chain, drawing attention the disproportionate burden faced by those who work in or live near textile manufacturing facilities as well as the waste produced by the industry.

Campbell, Carla, Rachael Greenberg, Deepa Mankikar, and Ronald D. Ross. **"A case study of environmental injustice: The failure in Flint."** *International Journal of Environmental Research in Public Health* 13, no. 10 (2016): 951.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph13100951>

This article traces the origins of the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, describing how low-income and minority community members come to face higher risk of lead exposure and offering solutions to prevent similar events from occurring in the future.

For a primer on the Flint water crisis, visit the NRDC's page here:

<https://www.nrdc.org/stories/flint-water-crisis-everything-you-need-know>

Chakraborty, Jayajit, Timothy W. Collins, and Sara E. Grineski. **"Exploring the environmental justice implications of Hurricane Harvey flooding in Greater Houston, Texas."** *American Journal of Public Health* 109, no. 2 (2019): 244-250.

<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2018.304846>

The article discusses the environmental justice implications of flooding from Hurricane Harvey in Houston, Texas. Using cartographic information from Harvey's inundation footprint and sociodemographic data, the authors established that those who were the most affected came from neighborhoods with a higher proportion of non-Hispanic Black residents and residents of low socioeconomic status.

Journal Articles

Eichelberger, Laura Palen. **"Living in utility scarcity: energy and water insecurity in Northwest Alaska."** *American Journal of Public Health* 100, no. 6 (2010): 1010-1018.

<https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2009.160846>

This paper examines utility scarcity and the water-energy nexus faced by rural Iñupiaq Eskimo villages in Alaska's Northwest Arctic Borough, drawing attention to the negative health impacts of decreased domestic water access.

Hamilton, James T. **"Testing for environmental racism: Prejudice, profits, political power?."** *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 14, no. 1 (1995): 107-132.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/3325435>

This study uses hazardous waste capacity expansion plans to examine hypotheses regarding why environmental exposures vary by race, including outright political discrimination, variability in willingness to pay, or variability in propensity towards community activism. Hamilton finds that the likelihood that a community will engage in collective action against environmental hazards, thus raising a firm's expected costs, is the best explanation for which neighborhoods were ultimately selected for expansion.

Harper, Janice. **"Breathless in Houston: A political ecology of health approach to understanding environmental health concerns."** *Medical Anthropology* 23, no. 4 (2004):

295-326. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01459740490513521>

In this classic work on political ecology of health, Harper discusses how poor air quality in Houston, Texas has disproportionately impacted the health of the city's residents, who are regularly exposed to high levels of legally released carcinogenic toxins.

Johnston, Jill E., Khang Chau, Meredith Franklin, and Lara Cushing. **"Environmental justice dimensions of oil and gas flaring in South Texas: Disproportionate exposure among Hispanic communities."** *Environmental Science & Technology* 54, no. 10 (2020): 6289-6298. <https://doi.org/10.1021/acs.est.0c00410>

This article examines ethnic disparities in exposure to flaring, a combustion technique used to dispose of excess gas generated through fracking, in the Eagle Ford shale play in South Texas. The flares produce hazardous air pollution, as well as noise and light pollution. The study found that Hispanics were disproportionately exposed to flares as compared to non-White Hispanics.

Journal Articles

Johnston, Jill E., Emily Werder, and Daniel Sebastian. "**Wastewater disposal wells, fracking, and environmental injustice in southern Texas.**" *American Journal of Public Health* 106, no. 3 (2016): 550-556. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.303000>

Waste disposal sites are typically located away from those who benefit from waste-generating activities. This study examined racial composition of residents living near oil and gas wastewater disposal wells, finding that disposal wells were disproportionately sited in high-poverty areas and areas with 80% or more people of color.

Kern, Leslie, and Caroline Kovesi. "**Environmental justice meets the right to stay put: Mobilising against environmental racism, gentrification, and xenophobia in Chicago's Little Village.**" *Local Environment* 23, no. 9 (2018): 952-966.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13549839.2018.1508204>

Using archival material, fieldwork, and interviews with community organizers, this paper examines how activists in Chicago's Latinx Little Village neighborhood fought back against environmental racism, white supremacy, and gentrification following the closure of coal-fired power plants and environmental policy changes.

Kirsch, Stuart. "**Anthropology and advocacy: a case study of the campaign against the Ok Tedi mine.**" *Critique of Anthropology* 22, no. 2 (2002): 175-200.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/03075X02022002851>

Papua New Guinea's Ok Tedi copper and gold mine produced significant environmental damage for indigenous communities living downstream. This article examines the role of anthropologists and the responsibilities anthropologists have to the subject of their researchers, arguing that neutrality may not be possible in instances of corporate-indigenous conflict, particularly because structural inequalities may enable corporations to co-opt and silence anthropological voices.

For a primer on the Ok Tedi mine, see the description in Patricia Townsend's book *Environmental Anthropology: From Pigs to Policies*, chapter 7, p. 53-57.

Journal Articles

Perreault, Tom, Sarah Wraight, and Meredith Perreault. **"Environmental Injustice in the Onondaga Lake Waterscape, New York State, USA."** *Water Alternatives* 5, no. 2 (2012). <http://www.water-alternatives.org/index.php/volume5/v5issue2/181-a5-2-17/file>

This article traces two distinct, yet interrelated instances of environmental injustice and activism within two communities in New York State's Onondaga watershed. Both the Onondaga Nation and Syracuse's Southside neighborhood have shared histories with marginalization in the waterscape, including erosion of water rights, pollution, and social exclusion.

Washington, Harriet A. **"How environmental racism is fuelling the coronavirus pandemic."** *Nature* 581, no. 7808 (2020): 241-241. <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-01453-y>

In this article, Washington examines how the environmental racism that disproportionately exposes people of color to environmental hazards is also contributing to the coronavirus pandemic, due to living conditions, environmental exposures, access to nutritious food, and access to green space.

Recent News Articles

Fight Against Environmental Racism Finally Gets Its Moment - Dec. 18, 2020

Justin Worland, Time

This news article describes how issues of environmental racism have begun to take center stage, after decades of environmental justice advocates fighting to draw attention to the disproportionate environmental risks faced by communities of color.

<https://time.com/5864704/environmental-racism-climate-change/>

Journals and Collections

Local Environments: The International Journal of Justice and Sustainability

Publications in this journal focus on just sustainability and the politics of environmental justice, providing diverse, critical voices on strategies for creating social and environmental justice in our communities. Learn more at <https://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cloe20/current>

Environmental Justice

This journal features publications focused on policies and regulations which create equitable environments and access for all, especially people from marginalized groups. <https://home.liebertpub.com/publications/environmental-justice/259/overview>

Biomed Central's Environmental Justice and Policy Research Collection

This collection features articles focused on environmental justice, particularly through equitable environmental policy and research on environmental hazards. <https://www.biomedcentral.com/collections/environmentaljusticeandpolicy>

Sustainability's Environmental Justice and Sustainability Special Issue

This special issue brings together a cross-disciplinary collection of articles examining environmental justice in sustainability issues, with particular attention to how sustainability efforts both reveal and conceal environmental disparities. https://www.mdpi.com/journal/sustainability/special_issues/Environmental_Justice_and_Sustainability

List of Journals on Environment and Society

SUNY's Department of Environmental Studies has compiled a list of journals that focus on topics related to environment and society, many of which feature articles on environmental justice issues. https://www.esf.edu/es/sonnenfeld/envsoc_journals.htm

Organizations and Initiatives

Texas

TEJAS is an organization dedicated to promoting environmental protection through education, policy development, community awareness, and legal action. For more information please visit <https://www.tejasbarrios.org/>

HERE in Houston is an initiative of the Citizens' Environmental Coalition that provides environmental resources for educators. Their environmental justice resource are available at <https://www.hereinhouston.org/env-justice>

The Sierra Club Lone Star Chapter is an environmental organization in Texas that believes in the protection of our open spaces, clean water, and natural resources for the future generations. Learn more at <https://www.sierraclub.org/texas/anti-racism>

The Houston Peace and Justice Center's mission is to provide peace education, activism training, and collaborative resources for individuals, families, and organizations throughout the Greater Houston area to build a just, non-violent community. For more information on their environmental justice work, please visit <https://www.hpjc.org/environmental-justice/>

Climate Action San Antonio is a coalition of committed individuals and organizations dedicated to building strong thriving communities in the face of the growing dangers of global climate change. For more information, please visit <https://climateactionsa.com/>

United States and Global

The Deep South Center for Environmental Justice is dedicated to improving the lives of children and families harmed by pollution and vulnerable to climate change in the Gulf Coast Region through research, education, community and student engagement for policy change. For more information, please visit <https://www.dscej.org/our-story>.

The International Society for Children's Health and the Environment is an interdisciplinary coalition that strives to promote research, policies, and trainings that forward children's environmental health. Learn more by visiting <https://ische.ca/>

Intersectional Environmentalist is platform to support intersectional environmentalism and dismantle systems of oppression in the environmental movement. For more information, please visit <https://www.intersectionalenvironmentalist.com>

Organizations and Initiatives

The All We Can Save Project is dedicated to fostering transformational leadership in the environmental sector by investing in a new generation of feminist climate leaders, particularly women of color. Learn more at <https://www.allwecansave.earth/project>

The Outdoor Advocacy Project focuses on stewardship, sustainability, and community ethics through education and action. For more information, please visit <https://www.instagram.com/outdooradvocacy/>

The Critical Ecology Lab is an interdisciplinary research and critical thought collaborative focused on measuring and critiquing the social dimensions of global environmental change. For more information, please visit <http://www.criticalecology.space/>

The Greening Youth Foundation's (GYF) mission is to engage under-represented youth and young adults, while connecting them to the outdoors and careers in conservation. For more, please visit <https://gyfoundation.org/>

WE ACT's mission is to build healthy communities by ensuring that people of color and/or low income residents participate meaningfully in the creation of sound and fair environmental health and protection policies and practices. For more information, please visit <https://www.weact.org/>

Cool Anthropology brings together emerging leaders and public scholars inside of the discipline of Anthropology, striving to echo and lift the voices and concerns of the least heard. For more information, please visit <https://www.coolanthropology.com/about/>

The EPA's Superfund program is responsible for cleaning up some of the nation's most contaminated land and responding to environmental emergencies, oil spills and natural disasters. To protect public health and the environment, the Superfund program focuses on making a visible and lasting difference in communities, ensuring that people can live and work in healthy, vibrant places. Learn more by visiting <https://www.epa.gov/superfund>

Podcasts

Dismantled

Dismantled is a podcast for intersectional environmentalists plus voices focused on climate justice. For more information, please visit

<https://www.intersectionalenvironmentalist.com/dismantled-podcast>

Living Downstream

Living Downstream explores environmental justice in communities from California to Indonesia. For more information, please visit

<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/655974992/living-downstream>

Stories from Home: Living in the Just Transition

Stories from Home: Living in the Just Transition shares experiences from valuable climate justice work of everyday people. For more information, please visit

<https://climatejusticealliance.org/cja-launches-new-podcast-series/>

Under the Weather: Climate Change Research and Justice

Under The Weather is a monthly lecture series on climate activism and research. For more information, please visit <http://undertheweather.ckut.ca/>

In this Climate

In this Climate outlines a sustainable and resilient path forward through rigorous analysis of scientific data, conversation, and storytelling. For more

information, please visit <https://climatepodcast.indiana.edu/>

Scholars to Know

Dr. Julian Agyeman is a Professor of Urban and Environmental Policy whose work focuses on “just sustainabilities” at the intersection of social justice and environmental sustainability movements. For more information, please visit <https://julianagyeman.com/>

Dr. Mustafa Santiago Ali is an environmental justice policymaker and activist committed to the fight for environmental justice and economic equity. For more information, please visit <https://www.mustafasantiagoali.com/about-mustafa/>

Dr. Mechelle Best is a Professor of Recreation and Tourism Management whose work explores “greening” in the hospitality industry, ecotourism, and how diverse communities engage with protected areas. For more information, please visit <https://www.csun.edu/sustainability/dr-michelle-best>

Dr. Robert Bullard, known as the Father of Environmental Justice, is a researcher, writer, and advocate for environmental justice. For more information, please visit <https://drrobertbullard.com/biography/>

Kimberlé Crenshaw is the originator of intersectional theory and is a leading authority on civil rights, Black feminist legal theory, and race, racism and the law. For more information, please visit <https://aapf.org/kimberle-crenshaw>

Dr. Carolyn Finney is a cultural geographer and storyteller whose work sheds light on the role of privilege and representation in formulating environmental policies. For more information, please visit <https://www.carolynfinney.com/about>

Catherine Coleman Flowers is an American environmental health researcher, writer and the founder of the Center for Rural Enterprise and Environmental Justice. For more information, please visit <https://centerforearthethics.org/catherine-flowers/>

Dr. Fushcia-Ann Hoover's work centers on green infrastructure (GI) performance, green infrastructure planning and environmental justice and equity. For more information, please visit <https://www.fushciahoover.com/>

Scholars to Know

Dr. Ayana Johnson is a marine biologist and intersectional climate policy expert whose work forwards conservation solutions grounded in social justice. For more information, please visit <https://www.ayanaelizabeth.com/>

Dr. Leith Mullings was an anthropologist whose work forwarded progressive social justice and racial equality. For more information, please visit <http://www.leithmullings.com/>

Dr. Suzanne Pierre is a microbial ecologist and biogeochemist whose interdisciplinary research critically examines how human inequality and environmental change intersect. For more information, please visit <https://www.suzannepierre.com/>

Dr. Dorceta Taylor is an environmental sociologist known for her work on both environmental justice and racism in the environmental movement. For more information, please visit <https://environment.yale.edu/profile/taylor>

Dr. Carlton Waterhouse is an international expert on environmental law and environmental justice, as well as reparations and redress for historic injustices. For more information, please visit <http://law.howard.edu/faculty-staff/carlton-waterhouse>

Relevant Work from the Cairns Lab

Papers

Cairns, Maryann R. "Metering water: Analyzing the concurrent pressures of conservation, sustainability, health impact, and equity in use." *World Development* 110 (2018): 411-421. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.06.001>

This study focuses on the impacts of water and sanitation (WatSan) development in Bolivia with particular attention to how water metering reveals conflicting pressures of conservation, sustainability, health impact and equitable access to water resources.

Cairns, Maryann R. "What water are you drinking? Infrastructure, perception and the "Raw Water" trend." *Anthropology Now* 10, no. 3 (2018): 59-69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19428200.2018.1602403>

This article discusses raw water, and a need for a better water infrastructure that allows safe and sustainable drinking water for all.

Cairns, Maryann R., Margaret Ebinger, Chanel Stinson, and Jason Jordan. "COVID-19 and human connection: Collaborative research on loneliness and online worlds from a socially-distanced academy." *Human Organization* 79, no. 4 (2020): 281-291. <https://doi.org/10.17730/1938-3525-79.4.281>

This research explores how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected connection, and how that connection has shifted into online spaces, offering innovative pedagogical approaches and research methodologies for drawing undergraduates into the research process.

Lascity, Myles Ethan, and Maryann R. Cairns. "Complicated green advertising: Understanding the promotion of clothing recycling efforts." *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* 15, no. 2 (2020). <http://doi.org/10.16997/wpcc.384>

This paper interrogates the promotion of recycling programs from four US brands, offering considerations for how fashion brands might be more impactful in their environmentalism.

Projects

The MERA project, part of the NSF Coastal SEES program, identifies practices that might expose people to pathogens in wastewater, improves sustainable water management approaches in the tropics, and recommends economically- and socially-feasible interventions to minimize human health risks. Learn more at <http://mera.marine.usf.edu/>

Presentations

The Cairns Lab gave the keynote roundtable at SMU's Fall 2020 Research Symposium, speaking about the lab's ethos, research, approach to diversity and inclusion in academia, and perspectives on forwarding undergraduate research. The talk is available here: <https://www.smu.edu/Provost/EngagedLearning/Undergraduate-Research/Fall-Symposium>

About this Document

These resources were compiled by members of the Cairns Lab in December 2020, prompted by a talk on the impacts of systemic racism that Dr. Maryann Cairns and Lenora Billings Harris gave as part of Ms. Billings-Harris' Wednesday Culture Conversation series, Race: More than Just Talk.

This document is not intended to be a comprehensive list, but rather a jumping-off point for exploring environmental justice scholarship and initiatives.

Know a resource you'd like us to include? Share it with us by emailing mcairns@mail.smu.edu



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