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Indigenous rights, performativity and protest

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ABSTRACT

Protests to claim rights are a common practice among Indigenous peoples of the world, especially when their interests conflict with those of nation states and/or multinational corporations regarding the use of their lands and resources. Drawing on a case study of the National Indigenous Mobilization held in Brasília, Brazil in May 2014, this paper describes how Indigenous protests and strategic actions (e.g., blockades, sit-ins, rallies, marches, and publicity campaigns) are arguably legitimate tactics for Indigenous peoples to seek the attention of a broader audience, establish dialogue with authorities and companies, and to achieve respect for their individual and collective human rights. These forms of community mobilization often occur in contexts where good faith processes (i.e., based on the principle of free, prior and informed consent, FPIC) were not properly implemented. We analyse the use of social media and the role of the mass media in giving visibility to the protests and in assigning or withdrawing broader social legitimacy. Using anthropological performance theory, we consider the political and social context of the Mobilization. Although negative Indigenisms (i.e., akin to Said's concept of Orientalism) are propagated in the media, a key finding is that symbolic actions and/or performative actions (a theatricality of resistance) are essential dimensions of Indigenous protest to achieve objectives. We conclude that Indigenous mobilizations are legitimate and necessary ways for Indigenous peoples to gain respect for their right to self-determination and other individual and collective human rights. Protests can also help in building social capital and ultimately have positive outcomes for the environment and community health and wellbeing.

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1. Introduction

Protests and other forms of community mobilization are a common occurrence when rights of Indigenous peoples are violated or when infrastructure projects affect their territory and wellbeing (Fisher, 1994; Davis, 2012; O'Faircheallaigh, 2012, 2013; Ruano, 2013). In the case of infrastructure projects, such as dams or roads, protests have been able to influence project outcomes in various ways. This paper discusses the role of Indigenous protest in influencing the decision-making processes that affect their lives. The right to self-determination and having a participative role in decision-making are guaranteed by the International Labour Organization Convention 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (ILO, 1989), as expressed in the principle of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) (Hanna and Vanclay, 2013).

In order to better demonstrate the dynamics by which protests assist Indigenous people in reaching their goals, this article analy-

ses the 2014 National Indigenous Mobilization, a major three-day demonstration held in Brasília in May 2014. The objectives of this mobilization were to protest against: (1) government policies affecting Indigenous peoples, including proposed changes in legislation that limit territorial rights; (2) a slow-down in the gazettement of Indigenous reserves as called for in the Constitution; and (3) proposals for a number of dams, including Belo Monte, that are affecting thousands of rural and Indigenous peoples and have been undertaken without adequate FPIC processes. The lead author was present during this protest as part of on-going research into the implementation of large development projects in Brazil and their social impacts on Indigenous peoples. Drawing on performance theory (Bauman and Briggs, 1990; Turner, 1977, 1982), we describe how Indigenous peoples use protest action, social media and the mass media to bring their messages to a broader audience and influence western imaginary in order to leverage political support for their causes (Turner, 2002). As observed in this case study, media coverage of protest's, however, does not always fairly present protesters claims and often negatively portrays their position.

We define community mobilization as a process that involves a call to action that results in a public gathering for the purpose

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of raising awareness about topics or issues, usually of a political nature, that are of concern to a specific group of people. It can encompass a broad range of strategic actions such as rallies, marches, blockades, protest camps, or publicity campaigns. Indigenous mobilizations are socially legitimate and, at times, necessary strategies to guarantee their right to self-determination and other individual and collective human rights (Kemp and Vanclay, 2013), as established by international law and Brazilian constitutional revisions over the last thirty years (Hanna et al., 2014). Protests can also contribute to social capital and ultimately have positive outcomes for community health and well-being.

2. The role of protest in achieving respect for indigenous rights

O'Faircheallaigh (2012, 2013) has proposed that community mobilization and actions such as protests and blockades can be important strategies for Indigenous or other rural peoples when their rights are threatened by corporate extractive activities. Other authors view such actions as also being necessary for other impacted communities (Daou, 2010; Devlin and Tubino, 2012). O'Faircheallaigh (2012, 2013) argued that in some situations, marginalised groups can successfully challenge the hegemony of major economic interests depending on structural conditions and historical constellation of forces surrounding the proposed project. Community protests are a crucial strategy to force governments, regulatory agencies and proponents to comply with permitting conditions and to mitigate the impacts caused by the project's construction and operations.

When social and environmental impacts are not being properly addressed in licensing procedures and strong political forces act against Indigenous interests (Hanna et al., 2014), protest performances invoking images of the 'noble savage' or 'ecological Indian' are frequently enacted as a negotiation strategy and to attract the attention of the broader society (Conklin and Graham, 1995; Conklin, 1997; Ulloa 2005). Carvalho's (2006) analysis of the opposition to the Belo Monte dam concluded that polarization between protestor and proponent is not beneficial, and recommended greater dialogue between proponents and impacted groups to facilitate improved mitigation and better outcomes for local communities. However, Osman (2000) argued that, in certain circumstances, a blockade of operations might be the only way to establish dialogue between groups, especially in a situation of major power imbalance. Many authors consider that Indigenous protests are efficient mechanisms to shift power relations and to apply pressure on key decision-makers (Condori, 2010; Earle, 2009; Fisher, 1994; Kirsch, 2007; Ruano, 2013).

Performance analysis provides a critical perspective for the study of protests and other manifestations of collective rights. Not only does it promote a focus on the emergent structures of social relations in the enactment process, it also calls for "greater attention to the dialectic between performance and its wider sociocultural and political-economic context" (Bauman and Briggs, 1990:61). Performance analysis examines links between the specific event and the larger context, both global and local, through processes of contextualization that emerge in the event (Langdon, 2006; Langdon and Wiik, 2010). Following Bakhtin's (2004) notion of dialogicality and the chains of communication that make up discourse, no performance occurs in isolation or without reference to current or prior enunciations, negotiations and events. For example, Brazilian Indigenous protests 'index' (i.e., refer to) international and national documents guaranteeing collective rights along with reference to specific events (Ruano, 2013).

The establishment of an international legal framework to protect Indigenous rights was part of earlier struggles by Indigenous

peoples worldwide and ultimately led to the United Nations Declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples in 2007 (Stavenhagen, 2009; Engle, 2011). In Brazil, Indigenous organizations successfully fought for a participating role in the drafting of the National Constitution in 1988 (Carneiro da Cunha, 1994) and succeeded in gaining a chapter specifically on Indigenous peoples ensuring a series of rights (Brasil, 1988)—even though these rights are frequently ignored in the everyday practice of the realpolitik. As is the case of other countries, legislative change has not always necessarily altered operational procedures, a phenomenon described as the governance gap or implementation gap (B&HRI, 2010; Stavenhagen, 2009; United Nations, 2011). Despite advances in legislation, Indigenous peoples must continue to struggle for their rights in order to influence decision-making processes and force the application of current legislation (including FPIC). Indigenous mobilizations, along with non-Indigenous support, can be seen as an attempt to enforce the application of national and international law.

Given the absence of existing channels for dialogue, Indigenous protest actions should be comprehended as legitimate spaces for the expression of rights and communication with corporations, governments and the larger society. It is important to mention here that legitimacy is not comprehended as legal legitimacy, but as a social legitimacy, as protesting in Brazil is a legal activity. Along with protests, other forms of cultural performance, such as festivals, dances and public spectacles, are important mechanisms to facilitate intercultural dialogue with policy makers and legislators (Guss, 2000) and for promotion and legitimization of Indigenous identity (Albuquerque, M.A.d.S., 2011; Graham and Penny, 2014; Hanna et al., 2014; Langdon and Wiik, 2010). In addition, participation in cultural performances provides important experiences for identity building, skill acquisition, learning and empowerment (Ruano, 2013). Through organizing and participating in protests, especially when the outcomes are positive, Indigenous people build social capital and influence their own future development (Veber, 1998).

In spite of the possible benefits of mobilisations and associated cultural performances, there is also persecution, prosecution and assassination of Indigenous protesters. Reports from several countries have registered frequent acts of criminalization, coercion and violence against protesters in situations where governments and corporate interests conflict with Indigenous peoples' rights (Anaya, 2010; Escolar et al., 2010; Organizaciones Indígenas, 2013; Sekaggya, 2010). Authorities also attempt to demobilize or disrupt Indigenous movements by exploiting existing internal contradictions and tensions, often co-opting faction leaders (Ruano, 2013). By influencing public opinion, such strategies can lead to serious backlash against the Indigenous leaders, for example as in the cases of Mario Juruna and Payakan (Graham, 2011; McCallum, 1994; Ramos, 1998), exacerbate latent intragroup conflict and are often accompanied by attempts by the State and media to discredit protest actions.

The use of tear gas, warrants for arrest and/or detention (especially of leaders), public exposure in the media of leaders on trial, seizure and/or destruction of possessions, and the destruction of protest symbols – flags, banners, encampments, and road or street blockades – are significant elements in the criminalization and/or de-politicisation [i.e., delegitimation and demobilisation] of Indigenous protest. (Ruano, 2013:234-author's translation)

Despite threats of coercion and intimidation, global campaigns to halt mega-projects continue to be initiated by Indigenous organizations and supportive NGOs. Some of the most important recent ones are: Stop Belo Monte against a mega-dam in Brazil; Idle no More against the Keystone pipeline in Canada; Chevron Toxic against an oil spill allegedly caused by Chevron in Ecuador; Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People against Shell activities and

oil spills in Nigeria; ¡Conga No Va! against the Conga mine in Peru; and many others, such as the mobilization against the TIPNIS road in Bolivia (McNeish, 2013) and campaigns against open pit-mining in Neuquén in Argentina.¹ Although mega-projects are generally the target of protest actions and public dissatisfaction (Flyvbjerg et al., 2003), some protests (including the 2014 Mobilisation that is the case study in this research) do not focus on a specific project but advocate for Indigenous rights in a general way, such as protests targeted at proposed law changes, which would negatively affect Brazilian Indigenous constitutional rights or demanding adequate FPIC processes to be conducted.

Despite the specificities and particularities of each context, several strategies are common to these mobilizations. Ruano (2013) suggests that a frequent tactic of Indigenous movements is the incursion into national capital cities as a form of performance of opposition to a given project. Visits of Indigenous leaders to international capitals such as New York and Paris, and to the headquarters of international organizations (UN, World Bank) and major companies are common. Such visits aim to attract the attention of international audiences, gain support of foreign leaders, and publicize activities that impact negatively on Indigenous lives or their environments. These performative events are extensively documented and displayed in the mass media and social media networks. Use of the Internet and social media websites for campaigning, publicizing and mobilizing protests has become an important tactic for Indigenous groups (Turner, 2002). These tactics serve the purpose of elevating local problems to a global level in order to draw attention and gain support from non-Indigenous allies.

The analysis of Indigenous protests as performance enables the comprehension of the complex relations between the actors involved: Indigenous peoples, the State, corporations, NGOs, and the media. Studying a particular event can reveal broader social aspects and relations between different social groups and institutions (Gluckman, 1940). Also, given all the positive benefits, Indigenous protests can be comprehended as a form of collective self-care practice (Menéndez, 2003). Self-care practices are those activities that are necessary for the biosocial reproduction of the individuals and the social group. Within this perspective, demands that focus on territorial rights and environmental issues are fundamental for Indigenous peoples socio-cultural reproduction, their wellbeing and their very survival. Without official recognition of Indigenous identity and territorial rights, impacted groups do not have access to the legal frameworks that protect their rights regarding self-determination, including the right to FPIC. Thus, protesting for land and other rights is essential for ensuring collective health and environmental sustainability.

3. The indigenous Brazilian context

Brazilian Indigenous peoples are yet to experience full citizenship, as they continue to be the object of discrimination and violence, with ongoing violation of their rights (Anaya, 2009). One arena in which such violation continues to occur is that of large infrastructure projects. Conflict in this arena is not new (Davis, 1977) and, as early as the 1950s, Ribeiro (1957) pointed out the tension between Brazil's economic development and Indigenous peoples. Ribeiro's analysis of the impact of Brazilian politics, extrac-

tive industries and international market fluctuations on Indigenous people's survival, remains true today:

the fundamental determinant of the destiny of Indigenous tribes, of the conservation or loss of their languages and cultures, is the national society as well as the international economy. The price of rubber, nuts and other products on the New York Stock Exchange and the prospects for peace or war among the great powers influences the ebb and flow of the waves of exploiters of forest products, determining whether the last remaining autonomous tribes will survive or be condemned to extermination. Ribeiro, 1957:100, authors' translation).

Since the 1970s, various subsequent Brazilian governments have planned and implemented many large infrastructure projects in the Amazon. Because the social impacts of these projects were largely ignored and/or irresponsibly managed, they have negatively impacted the lives of Indigenous peoples. Davis (1977:167) described the process of development as a "silent war ... against aboriginal peoples, innocent peasants and the rainforest ecosystem", nominating the Trans-Amazon Highway as the worst example. The conflict between government plans and Indigenous peoples gained greater attention in the 1980s with the growth of Indigenous organizations and their role in constitutional reform. The government proposal to build the huge Kararaô Dam on the Xingu River in the Amazon region was met with a large Indigenous mobilization in February 1989, and has become known as the Altamira Gathering, after the city where it was held. Led by the charismatic Kayapó leaders, Payakan and Raoni, and with international support from such personalities as the rockstar, Sting, and former French Presidents, François Mitterrand (Menezes Bastos, 2012) and Jacques Chirac, the dramatic mobilization gained the attention of the world's media, and consequently construction of the dam was halted. One emblematic portrayal of this confrontation, considered to be the first major Indigenous mobilization in Brazil, is the now well-publicized picture of Tuíra Kayapó holding a machete to the face of José Antônio Muniz Lopez, the then Director of the regional electricity company Eletronorte, and subsequently President of the national electricity company, Eletrobrás.²

The victories of the Labour Party's candidates for President – Luís Inácio Lula da Silva in 2002 and 2006, and Dilma Rousseff in 2010 – has meant many reforms to health, education and welfare in an attempt to counter Brazil's great economic disparity. However, the Indigenous situation has become more critical during these years as Indigenous peoples have faced increasing problems of violence due to land conflict (e.g., the Guarani-Kaiowá people in Mato Grosso do Sul),³ expressions of discrimination reflected in the mass media portrayal of Indigenous peoples (Anaya, 2009), and threats to territorial rights because of the construction of large infrastructure projects that impact upon Indigenous lands and resources (Hanna et al., 2014). The Indigenous peoples relationship with the Rousseff administration has continued to deteriorate due to a series of conflicts between territorial rights and development policy. In the last 5 years, conflicts have increased due to: a slow-down in the demarcation of Indigenous reserves; assassination of Indigenous leaders involved in territorial disputes; racist (anti-Indigenous) statements made by certain Congressional members; and the proposed construction of dams in the Amazon region without due FPIC process, including the initiation of the Belo Monte dam. Regarding land conflicts, Indigenous peoples argue that the government is ignoring the

¹ Respectively, websites related to each campaign are: www.amazonwatch.org/work/belo-monte-dam ; www.idlenomore.ca ; www.chevrontoxico.com ; www.mosop.org ; congaeuropa.wordpress.com ; www.rainforest-rescue.org/mailalert/740/solidarity-with-bolivia-indigenous-peoples-demonstrate-against-road-through-the-rainforest; www.noalamina.org/mineria-argentina/neuquen.

² The famous picture and more information about the Altamira gathering can be found at the following link: <http://www.internationalrivers.org/blogs/232/a-knife-in-the-water>.

³ Several Guarani-Kaiowá, including important leaders, have been assassinated in recent years due to land conflicts with farmers in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, an issue is also described by Anaya (2009).

process established in the 1988 Constitution by trying to implement dialogue tables in each territory where farmers and local Indigenous people are in confrontation, a measure that has arguably intensified the conflicts (CIMI, 2014). Since the current Roussef administration took office, the number of Indigenous protests has increased.

There is a strong constellation of forces in Brazil that works against the interests of Indigenous peoples, including the rural lobby in the national Congress, large contractors, the Ministry of Mining and Energy, and the mass media corporations. Those advocating on behalf of Indigenous interests include NGOs, Universities (i.e. the Humanities faculties, as Engineering faculties and upper level administration tend not be supportive of Indigenous causes), some employees within government departments and agencies and, of course, Indigenous grassroots organizations. Carneiro da Cunha (2012) described the Brazilian government as ambidextrous, promoting social inclusion on the one hand, as demonstrated by successful social welfare programs, while with the other hand promoting fast-track development at the cost of basic (Indigenous) rights.

The controversy around the construction of the Belo Monte dam characterizes the on-going tension between the Administration's emphasis on economic development and Indigenous rights. Despite strong opposition from Indigenous peoples and environmentalists, the government revived plans to construct a major dam on the Xingu River and, for the sake of the "national interest", has pressed ahead with its construction without a proper FPIC process, arguing that the dam is essential to avoid future energy blackouts and to ensure energy security (Passarinho, 2011). A letter from the Indigenous Peoples Association of Brazil (APIB, 2014) addressed to the presidential candidates in September 2014 identified key current Indigenous issues: attempts to alter Indigenous constitutional rights; the government's alliances with agribusiness, construction firms and mining and timber corporations; and the government's unconditional support of large projects that affect Indigenous lands.

FPIC has not been properly applied in Brazil, especially in the context of mega-projects. This is substantiated in a recent report from the International Working Group on Indigenous Affairs, an international indigenous rights NGO:

The Brazilian government has constantly and systematically ridden roughshod over the rights of the indigenous population when it comes to Belo Monte and other PAC [Growth Acceleration Program] ventures, to the extent that this could almost be considered a government strategy to wipe out Brazil's indigenous population altogether. To give just one example, the Belo Monte hydro-electric plant had its licence suspended for failing to comply with the Brazilian Constitution and ILO Convention 169. A decision of the Federal Supreme Court ruled that the work could be resumed, however, with the Court President arguing that 'any delay in the work schedule would represent a threat to the national economy (IWGIA, 2013:163).

Norte Energia, a consortium comprising private and state-owned companies and responsible for the building and operation of the Belo Monte Dam, claimed to have conducted 38 meetings with the 24 Indigenous communities affected by the project in order to comply with its legal obligations to consult (Norte Energia, 2012). However, Indigenous organizations and external observers criticized the way in which the consultation meetings were held, arguing that they consisted of highly technical content, incomprehensible to the local community (Anaya, 2010). They also claimed that the proponents failed to comply with conditions for compensation as documented in the Basic Environmental Plan (PBA). The Brazilian Environmental Agency (IBAMA) issued a report stating that, although fulfilment of licensing requirements was far behind schedule, the construction of the Belo Monte dam was advancing very quickly (Brasil, 2013; Santilli, 2013). Other agencies

have determined that the health indicators of the Indigenous peoples affected by the dam have worsened since construction began, blaming the failure to observe agreed mitigation measures (FUNAI, 2012). As construction is now proceeding without implementation of many of the prescribed mitigation measures, social and environmental impacts will be aggravated (ISA, 2014). According to the Federal Prosecutor responsible for overseeing the process, the current context can be described as an ethnocide of the Indigenous peoples affected by the dam (Santi, 2014).

Construction of the dam has been disrupted by several protests. Once again, Chief Raoni gained the support of powerful allies, such as film director, James Cameron of Avatar fame (Jampolsky, 2012), and the Hollywood actor and former Governor of California, Arnold Schwarzenegger. However, despite Indigenous opposition that organized blockades at the construction site on several occasions (Boadle, 2013), and injunctions to stop work by the Office of Public Prosecution (Ministério Público Federal, MPF), dam construction has continued.

Adding to this crisis, there was growing public outcry due to the large cost in preparing for the 2014 FIFA World Cup that was held in 12 Brazilian capital cities. Preparations for the World Cup involved construction of new stadiums and upgrade of transportation facilities, including roads and airports. However, there was major opposition to housing relocations in host cities, including Brasília. For this reason, the Homeless Workers Movement (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto—MTST) also joined the Indigenous National mobilization in 2014. In June 2013, during the FIFA Confederations Cup, protests were held in many cities. Not always peaceful, this national uprising ultimately led to President Roussef attempting to appease the population by introducing a five-point plan addressing: economic policy; political reform; health; education; and public transport. An occupation of the National Congress in April 2013 precipitated a group of Indigenous leaders to be granted a meeting with the President in June 2013 – her first meeting with Indigenous peoples – and in which various issues were discussed. The 2013 uprising and a subsequent Indigenous National Mobilization in October 2013 were the precursors for the 2014 Brazilian Indigenous National Mobilization.

4. Methodology for the case study

This paper is primarily based on fieldwork conducted in May 2014 on the Brazilian Indigenous National Mobilization. It is also based on an extensive review of literature and key documents; as well as an analysis of media coverage, websites and social media with regard to large infrastructure projects and Indigenous protests. Primary data collection methods included: participant observation; field interviews; note-taking; recording key events via photos, videos and audio; and following television and newspaper coverage. Fieldnotes and a research diary were made in Portuguese, and were later transcribed and analysed using the qualitative data-analysis software, Atlas-Ti. The researcher's personal network facilitated contact with the protest organizers and Indigenous leaders as well as gaining permission to participate in the event. Ethical research practice was followed, with the research being approved by the ethics committee of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen and informed consent was obtained from all who were interviewed (Vanclay et al., 2013).

The mobilization was organized by APIB (the Brazilian Association of Indigenous Peoples) with support from national and international NGOs, such as Greenpeace and Amazon Watch. Over 500 people attended this three-day mobilization representing ethnic groups from different regions across Brazil. A closed workshop attended by the leaders was held prior to the mobilization in order to discuss and plan a program for the three days. A follow-up reflection

Fig. 1. Performing identity and public display of posters.

tion workshop was held at the end of each day and to plan the next day's activities. Alongside Chief Raoni, other important Indigenous leaders were present including: Megaron Txucarramae, the likely successor to Raoni; APIB's coordinator Sônia Guajajara; and Chief Marcos Xucuru, the son of Chief Chicão Xucuru who was assassinated in 1998 during a land struggle.

We analyse the major events of the mobilisation, examining the role of performance in attempting to redress the injustices occurring within the Brazilian context and how it references the larger Indigenous struggle for ethnic recognition and rights. In addition, in the face of the negative mass media coverage of the mobilization, we explore the Indigenous use of the Internet and social media as a strategy for countering these negative representations.

5. The Brazilian indigenous national mobilization 2014 in three acts

5.1. Act 1: Smiles at the National Congress and tears at the National Stadium

Act 1 comprised the events surrounding the gathering of the Indians⁴ on the first day of the Mobilization and a planned march to the National Stadium, which also led to the storming of the rooftop of the National Congress building. The day started around 10.00 am when a number of busses with the Indians began arriving in front of the Supreme Court. The Indians alighted from the buses embellished with the symbols that have become emblematic of Indigenous identity—bodies and faces adorned with warpaint, feathers, beads and head dresses (see Fig. 1). They carried gourd rattles, drums and weapons such as bows-and-arrows and clubs. The media began arriving shortly afterwards. Four circles of differ-

ent ethnic groups formed, performing chanting and dancing, and displaying banners of their demands.

The first strategic protest action was the formal delivery to the reception desk of the Supreme Court of a letter of demand addressed to the President of the Supreme Court. Before making the delivery, one of the Indigenous leaders read the letter aloud for the benefit of the press and observers. The letter demanded the prosecution of two Congressmen who had recently made racist statements. Congressman Alceu Moreira had stated that ranchers and land owners should use 'all necessary means' to kick the 'Indigenous crooks' off their properties, while Congressman Luiz Eduardo Heinze stated in a formal speech that "the government . . . is in bed with the blacks [maroons], the Indians, the gays, the lesbians, all the losers",—a statement that granted him the 'Racist of the Year' award (Survival International, 2014).

People then had lunch sheltering from the hot sun outside the Supreme Court building. Afterwards, various leaders began coordinating the protestors – estimated at 1000 people by the police and by 2500 by protest organizers (Veleda, 2014) – to start the march to the National Stadium along the most important street of Brasília, the Monumental Axis, where all the federal government buildings and ministries are located (see Supplementary material Map 1). As the march progressed, they were closely followed by a large contingent of police and were also flanked by police. The total number of police called up for the operation probably exceeded the number of protestors.

Passing alongside the National Congress, in a quick, bold manoeuvre, the Indians were able to occupy its roof. Two security guards quickly arrived pointing guns and some Indians pointed their arrows back and began to sing. The guards retreated, but organized a barrier to protect the entrance to the Congress. The protestors displayed their banners for about 20 min on the top of the National Congress, drawing the media's attention (see Fig. 2). Afterwards, they descended from the roof unimpeded and resumed the march to the National Stadium.

At the Central Bus Station, the Indians then converged with about 300 people protesting against the World Cup, a crowd com-

⁴ Indian/Indians is a respectful, widely-used term in Brazil to refer to Indigenous Peoples. Because of its common usage in Brazil, we will use this term to refer to the Indigenous individuals, particularly when we are discussing the Mobilization.

Fig.2. Indigenous peoples are photographed by the media on the roof of the National Congress.

prised of the Brazilian Homeless Movement (MTST) and other civil society groups affected by displacement (see Fig. 3). The combined crowd of about 800 people then marched to the National Stadium, where the World Cup Trophy was on display. At the Stadium it was intended to enact a theatrical people's trial of the Brazilian Government and FIFA on charges of alleged violations of human rights and corruption in the preparations for the World Cup. They also planned to deliver a blood-stained replica of the World Cup trophy (see Fig. 4).

All was peaceful until they approached the Stadium, which was heavily defended by mounted police. When the Indians neared the cavalry, pepper gas and crowd control bombs rained down, and everyone began desperately to run in different directions (see Fig. 5). Nobody was expecting such violent crowd dispersal action, since the organizers had announced that they had been given permission from the police officer-in-charge to demonstrate near the Stadium. Some Indians hit the crowd control bombs with their war

clubs or kicked them, sending them back towards the police line. The protesters tried to approach the Stadium from different sides, rather than along the Monumental Axis. However, this was without success because more police arrived, along with three helicopters. Whenever the Indians tried to advance towards the Stadium, the police responded with more crowd control bombs. It was a very tense situation, with some protesters sustaining injuries from rubber bullets and bomb fragments. One policeman was wounded by an arrow. As a result of the melee, people began to disperse, frustrated and angry. The Indians retreated to a grassy area alongside the stadium to make a big final circle to dance and sing. A police lieutenant came over, and in a conciliatory fashion said that the police were there to ensure everyone's safety and he 'authorized' the Indians to perform their dances and singing. At around 9.00 pm, the busses came to take the Indians back to their accommodation on the outskirts of Brasília.

Fig. 5. Protesters dispersed by tear gas around the National Stadium.

5.2. Act 2: Media wars, spiritual support and a victory

The Second Act relates how the first day of protest was depicted by the media, particularly by the largest Brazilian TV station, Globo. Its national news hour focused almost exclusively on the ‘violence’ of the demonstrations and exalted the contribution of the World Cup for the national economy. Images of protesters throwing stones and kicking bombs back at the police were constantly repeated. The motivations and demands of the protesters were not mentioned, nor were the contents of their banners shown (except perhaps inadvertently). Neither was it mentioned that the police shot at the demonstrators even though they had obtained permission to march to the Stadium.

I discussed the biased approach of the media with a coordinator of a NGO supporting the mobilization. The coordinator was in close contact with journalists, briefing them about the protests and providing general information. She mentioned to me an ongoing conversation she had had with a TV reporter who called several times to get information. The coordinator said: “we provide you information and then you guys produce biased coverage” and she questioned whether the reporter had any autonomy over the materials that would ultimately be broadcast. The reporter replied he did have some control. However, she said that when the content was later aired, she considered it to be very bad, as it was a short news-piece focused only on the arrow wound of the police officer. The next day she complained to the reporter, who replied that “everything is decided higher-up”, and that it was not up to the individual reporters.

Well aware of the negative national coverage, protest supporters used their virtual social networks and blogs to draw attention to the distorted media coverage. A critical cartoon widely circulated on the Internet depicted a police officer standing over a pile of corpses with a reporter asking whether his arrow wound hurts (see Fig. 6). This cartoon mocks the disproportional attention the media gave to the alleged violence of the protesters, ignoring other issues—a strategy regarded by the protesters as an attempt to crim-

inalize them. The Indigenous leaders called a press conference on the second day to contest the news coverage and present their side of the story.

A press conference held by the protestors at the building of the National Union of Teachers of Higher Education Institutions (ANDES), started just after midday and was attended by reporters from local, national and international news media. After the presentations by Indigenous leaders and spokespersons from other social movements, questions from the reporters focused primarily on the alleged violence of the protesters, and especially the use of war clubs and bows and arrows. In response, Chief Marcos Xucuru emphasized the importance of the spiritual world, affirming that the Indians need their songs and traditional weapons to evoke the spiritual protection of the ancestral spirits (*encantados*)—and in fact much of the singing at the protests was sacred chanting. At the end of the conference, the Indians showed reporters the injuries they had sustained from rubber bullets and bombs fragments (see Fig. 7).

During the press conference, the majority of the Indians were waiting in front of the National Congress, where a few Indigenous leaders were in a meeting with the leaders of the Chamber of Deputies and Federal Senate. Two famous Brazilian artists, the singer Toni Garrido and actress Maria Paula, accompanied the Indians. During the long hours of waiting, those outside demonstrated with dancing, singing and display of banners for the media. About 7.30 pm, the leaders finally emerged from the building, smiling, apparently satisfied with the outcome. Sônia Guajajara, flanked by her fellow leaders, announced to the press (see Fig. 8) that an agreement had been made with the Leader of the Chamber of Deputies that the proposed controversial legislative changes, aimed to reduce Indigenous rights, would only go to the vote if there was consensus on the issue in the Chamber. This was considered to be very unlikely, due to its controversial nature. However, Sônia emphasised the need to maintain a state of alert. As the crowd began to disperse, I asked her whether this agreement was a positive outcome. She said, “Yes, it is a victory”.

Fig. 6. "Is that arrow wound hurting, officer?".

Source: Vitor Teixeira (used with permission of the artist).

Fig. 7. Indians show their injuries from rubber bullets and bombs fragments to reporters.

5.3. Act 3: Performativity, negotiation strategies and a declaration of war

The third and last day of the Mobilization started with a different strategy. The Indians arrived early at the Justice Ministry, before police and security had arrived, in an attempt to occupy the building to force a meeting with the Minister of Justice, Eduardo Cardozo. Being unable to enter the building, small groups took up positions at each door (see Fig. 9). Staff already inside the building could not leave, those outside could not enter. The aim of the blockade was

to force an audience with the Minister of Justice in order to discuss the lack of new land demarcations. The gazettal of several Indigenous reserves had been halted, at a point in which they only lacked the signatures of the Minister of Justice and/or the President. The demonstrators outside the building were holding up pens to offer to the Minister, and there was a teenager with a basket full of pens (see Fig. 10), and several banners saying "Sign it now, Cardozo!".

Indigenous leaders had to engage in a complicated negotiation process to set the time for meeting the Minister. The Indians demanded an appointment at 13:00, but the Minister suppos-

Fig. 8. Indigenous peoples, alongside reporters, record Sônia Guajajara's (at rear second from left) announcement after the meeting with mobile phones and tablets.

Fig. 9. Indigenous peoples block one of the entrances to the Justice Ministry.

edly could only arrive at 17:00, so it was agreed halfway, 15:00. When it was clear that the Minister would meet with the group, Ministry staff were allowed in and out of the building. However, the protesters maintained a semi-blockade for the whole day, not allowing the general public into the building. During the day, about 300–400 protestors were dispersed around the building and

grounds. Among them were Brazilian Maroons (Quilombolas), who are also affected by the proposed law change and had joined the protest during the afternoon.

Another negotiation issue was the number of participants who would be allowed in to the meeting. The Indians wanted all present to be able to participate, but the government negotiators set 10

Fig. 10. Teenager with a basket full of pens, with a sign stating “Sign it now, Cardoso”.

Fig. 11. Indigenous peoples chain themselves to the flagpole outside the Ministry of Justice.

as the maximum. The Indians then suggested 20 representatives. For several hours, the discussion revolved around 12 participants. Frustrated, at around 16:00, five Indians chained themselves to the flagpole in front of the building and waved the Constitution around (see Fig. 11), drawing the attention of the press. This highly-publicized dramatic enactment played an important role in reaching a final agreement allowing 18 Indigenous plus two non-

Indigenous counsellors to participate in the meeting. One Brazilian Maroon was included amongst the 18 Indigenous representatives.

Shortly after, 17:00, the nominated Indigenous representatives and press were allowed to enter the building in preparation to meet the Minister. A representative of the Minister instructed that the press would only be allowed to take pictures (i.e., no questions) and would need to leave when the meeting proper started. In the conference room, the Indigenous representatives distributed

Fig. 12. Dancing and chanting to provide spiritual support for those in the meeting.

their three-page manifesto to everyone present. A reporter from TV Globo quickly started typing the whole manifesto into his mobile phone. Shortly after, the image of the Indians shackled to the flagpole and the complete manifesto was the feature story on the Globo website.

Minister Cardozo arrived around 17:30 together with the President of FUNAI. He gave his apologies for the delay stating that he was in a meeting with the Governor of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, and he invited Sônia Guajajara to come forward to the lectern to make initial remarks. At this point, members of the press were ushered out. I left also and joined the larger group of protesters outside to wait for the results of the meeting. As the hours passed and the meeting went on, there was more chanting and dancing (see Fig. 12). Many protesters criticized the media exposure of the 3-day long protest and its portrayal of the Indians as violent. People were also speculating about the outcome of the meeting and if any or some of the many requested Indigenous reservations would finally receive the Minister's signature.

At 19:30 the Indigenous representatives withdrew from the meeting in an act of protest. They held a brief press conference alongside those still chained to the flagpole (see Fig. 13). Their outrage was evident and one classified it as “the worst meeting of my life”. In their comments to the press, one stated, “the Minister is not committed to anything at all and just wants to keep holding dialogue tables”. One of the Indigenous leaders alleged that the delays and conflict created by the dialogue tables had already resulted in the assassination of two Indians.⁵ One protester pulled the gigantic national flag down from the flagpole and painted it with *urucum*, the Indigenous, red-colored bodypaint. Someone warned him that

this was a crime, and he fled. Another declared: “Now it's war!”—marking the end of the protest and dispersal of the crowd.

6. Performativity and protest

It is possible to make a comparison of the unfolding of the protest events with the stages of a ritual process or social drama proposed by Turner (1980, 1982). According to Turner (1969), a ritual process can be identified as a marked social event, such as festivities, theatre and religious ceremonies, while social dramas are “units of aharmonic or disharmonic process, arising in conflict situations” (Turner, 1974:37). There is always latent conflict in social life and social dramas are periods in which conflict becomes explicit, disrupting the normal flow of interaction and demanding efforts of resolution. Turner suggested that there are four main phases in a social drama: breach (a disruptive event that is a precursor to the drama), crisis (the period during which the latent conflict becomes explicit and the crisis becomes established), redressive action (attempts to reconcile), and reintegration or irreparable schism (the possible final outcomes of the social drama). The redressive phase is characterized by rituals, judicial processes and/or subversive performances, such as protests that attempt to resolve the on-going conflict and/or to affect the structural relations of power (Turner, 1977, 1980). It is within this perspective that we analyse the National Indigenous Mobilization event of May 2014, one that occurred in a context of rising conflict (crisis) between Indigenous groups and the current government (see Table 1).

According to Ramos (2002:257), “through the centuries, insurgencies, revolts, uprisings, messianic movements, and other forms of protest against so much destruction did little more for Indigenous peoples all over the American continent than deepen their submission to the national power.” In the late twentieth century, however,

⁵ There are documented reports of conflict between ranchers and Indigenous peoples which have led to the murder of several Indigenous peoples (CIMI, 2014).

Fig. 13. Final press conference with those chained to the mast.

Table 1
Historical events and social drama phases.

Date/event	Description	Social drama phase
2003–Lula election	Relatively good relationship with Indigenous peoples	Latent conflict
2007–2010–Belo Monte Dam	In 2007 the government launches the Growth Acceleration Program, in which the Belo Monte Dam is announced. The dam is formally approved in February 2010	Breach
2011–Dilma Election	Planning of new dams in the Amazon; lack of land gazetting; attacks on Indigenous rights	Crisis
2013–2014–Indigenous National Mobilizations	Indigenous peoples organize the Indigenous National Mobilization on 2013 and 2014, in an attempt to have their concerns addressed by President Dilma Rousseff	Redressive action
2014	The Indigenous National Mobilization face police repression in the first day and finishes without any commitment from the government in demarcating new lands or suspending the planned dams. Indigenous peoples declare: “Now it’s war!”	Irreparable schism

now with new peaceful weapons, the “interethnic battlefields have been relocated to the news media, courtrooms, and parliaments.” More recently, social media and other communication technologies have also played an important role in the organization and promotion of Indigenous protests. The National Indigenous Mobilization frequently used its own blog⁶ to post information about the Mobilization, in response to media information it regarded as distorted or biased. An Indigenous filmmaker, Kamikia Kisedje, broadcast the 3 days of protests live to the internet through Twitcasting, while several other activists posted updates on Twitter and Facebook.

Chief Raoni’s trip to Europe, immediately after the Mobilization, was also widely reported on social media websites. The aim of his trip was to encourage public opposition against companies that participate in the Belo Monte venture, such as the energy companies, GDF Suez and Alstom (Cabanes, 2014; Poirier, 2014).

These events demonstrate the value of the ‘info-wars’ for Indigenous activism in the face of negative media portrayal. Indigenous peoples are conscious of the way their image is perceived by western eyes, and the use of bodypaint, feathers, body ornaments, and display of cultural paraphernalia as a strategy of political performance (Conklin, 1997). However, representation of Indigenous peoples in public imaginaries has been ambiguous since the XVI century, ranging from the ‘noble savage’ to ‘dreadful cannibal’

⁶ mobilizaconacionalindigena.wordpress.com.

in early Brazilian publications (Belluzzo, 1994; McCallum, 1994; Ramos, 1998). While the noble savage has become associated with that of the ecological and spiritual Indian, the dreadful cannibal has been replaced by 'dirty, drunk and lazy', holding the Indigenous peoples responsible for their own predicament (Nascimento, 2014). The UN Special Rapporteur report on human rights in Brazil has recognized the unfavourable image consistently spread by the news media:

In Brazil, the news media seem to have a key role in shaping, as well as in reflecting, this political environment. During his visit, the Special Rapporteur witnessed a polemical news media climate that exhibited a misunderstanding about, and even hostility towards, Indigenous issues. With a few notable exceptions, while the Special Rapporteur was in Brazil the demands being made by Indigenous peoples and the gains they have made in the recognition of their rights were treated with suspicion or worse. There seemed to be minimal representation of Indigenous peoples or their organizations in the news media, with little opportunity for Indigenous peoples to influence the content of material that was published or broadcast about them or on their behalf. (Anaya, 2009: 9–10)

All of these issues relate to the vexed question of the effectiveness of protest actions. We consider that effectiveness is not a straightforward matter. The purpose of any action is rarely the immediate target (e.g. storming the roof of the National Assembly), but rather a longer-term goal of influencing public and political opinion. However, public and political opinion change slowly and cannot be easily directly measured. Furthermore, since all protest actions usually have multiple goals—including the need for identity-affirmation, immediate victory on particular issues, longer-term public and political support, as well as dealing with the diversity of national and international press interests—determining success is difficult. In fact, all protest actions are likely to have elements of success and elements of failure.

In discussing the biased representation with my research participants, many said that they thought the media in Brazil (and perhaps other Latin American countries, see Escobar et al., 2010) was more prejudiced towards Brazilian Indigenous Peoples than the foreign media, which tends to be supportive of Indigenous causes.

Drawing on the notion of Said (1994) that Western perceptions of the East are a myriad of patronising and misrepresenting 'Orientalisms', Ramos (1998, 2002, p.275) introduces the term 'Indigenisms' as "an American style, amplified form of Orientalism" in an attempt to capture the entanglement of ideologies and images that society constructs of its Indigenous peoples and vice versa, and that are part of the interethnic misunderstandings. Media representations are one setting in which Indigenisms are propagated, and can be effective channels for influencing public opinion, especially when the media is in the control of the Indigenous peoples. While not able to control national media, Indigenous tactics of self-representation through the use of blogs and other national and transnational communication networks and other technologies are playing a central role in publicizing their version of events to a broader audience through pragmatic manipulation of their representations.

Analysis of the events at the mobilization, especially as described in Act 3, indicate the conscious use of planning and strategy to achieve desired outcomes through tactics to disrupt government institutions and gain the attention of decision-makers to their claims. The choice to organize the mobilization a few weeks before the FIFA World Cup was strategic given the international attention focussing on Brazil and the expectations and worries surrounding preparations for the games. The timing guaranteed the presence of the mass media and its role in pressuring government decision makers during the three days. The Indigenous performativity, with its use of warpaint, feathers, head dresses, drums,

dances, and weapons, reflects their use of representation as a mediator of social relations of political struggle. It also demonstrates the process of 'activist' objectification of culture as described by Terence Turner (1991, 2002). As Turner (2002) discusses in his analysis of the use of the Kayapó video, 'Peace between Chiefs', Indigenous people are gaining mastery over the use of video technology to control their self-representations and draw attention of an international audience to the political struggles they face. The movie "Owners of the Water" further demonstrates the growing use of video technology by Indigenous activists to promote their social protest causes (Graham et al., 2009).

Live streaming, blog updates and social networking platforms are other ways that Indigenous peoples counter the monopoly of the mass media corporations. This becomes especially pertinent when the information produced by the mass media is biased against their interests. The use of the Internet gives Indigenous peoples the possibility of manipulating their own representations and has the effect of the "importation of politics into representation itself, as a relation of power between dominant signifier and subordinate signified" (Turner, 2002: 244). In the case of the Mobilization discussed here, the Indigenous performance drew upon the formulaic use of bodypaint, feathers and ritual dances to index their representation of the ecological Indian (Conklin, 1997; Conklin and Graham, 1995). They also enacted scenes that referenced historical situations of domination and the violation of Indigenous rights established by the Constitution in their dramatic performance of chaining themselves to flagpole during the negotiations surrounding the meeting with the Minister.

The chaining to the flagpole reflects an historical form of physical punishment (*tronco*) meted out to Indigenous peoples by governmental authorities until the 1960s by immobilizing the person in stocks or chaining them to a tree trunk (Almeida and Nötzold, 2014). Given that the Maroon peoples were also involved in the negotiations, the performance also indexed their former condition of slavery. The event drew considerable media attention and perhaps was influential in the final number of Indigenous and Maroon representatives allowed in the meeting with the Minister, however it did not guarantee a positive outcome for the negotiations. It must be pointed out that the mobilization occurred during an election year, one in which the agricultural lobby exerted its power to prevent further expansion of Indian lands. Thus, the social drama did not end with a reintegration between the two contesting parties, but with the recognition of an irreparable schism (Turner, 1974).

Conclusion

Indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities elsewhere share the common problem of achieving full participation in the democratic system of the society in which they are located (Van Cott, 2005). As suggested by other authors (Fisher, 1994; Davis, 2012; O'Faircheallaigh, 2012, 2013; Ruano, 2013), because they are excluded from participation, Indigenous protests are legitimate strategies of disruption in order to draw attention to issues they face. However, as this research and experiences elsewhere demonstrate (Kirsch, 2007), the success of these protest actions is not always achieved. For example, mixed outcomes were evident at the National Indigenous Mobilization. On the one hand, Congress leaders promised that the planned anti-Indigenous legislation would not be approved without a consensus among the Congress members. On the other hand, the meeting with the Justice Minister did not result in satisfaction of their demands, despite strong symbolic and performative actions to pressure the Minister. However, some months after the Mobilization, during the second round of the national elections in October 2014, Indigenous peoples did receive a reply to the letter they had addressed to the presidential candidates

in the first round of the elections (APIB, 2014), in which the now re-elected President committed to some of their claims (Roussef, 2014). We consider that such agreement is, in part, attributable to the influence of the National Mobilization, which helped leverage political support for Indigenous peoples in Brazil.

Gluckman (1954) analyzed the rituals of rebellion in southeast Africa and proposed that they can act as a cathartic mechanism for society, in which protests are expected and contained by the social structure, even being considered a fundamental part of it. It is possible to consider that all community protest can have such a characteristic. Thus, in contexts of repeated domination and power differences, even the most magnificent performance can not necessarily change the status quo or established institutional order, and runs the risk of being a 'ritual of rebellion'. Mass media and other communication networks can have an important role in amplifying the message of Indigenous performances and affecting public opinion that aids the protesters negotiation power. As argued before, Indigenous peoples are represented by disparate and contradictory images in interethnic politics, and the media plays an important role in the construction of society's perceptions. Despite the arguable general prejudice against Indigenous peoples who use western technology, the appropriation of communication networks and the employment of new representational media by them has become a vital and assertive form of empowerment of Indigenous peoples in ethnic politics (Turner, 2002).

Indigenous mobilizations have a positive impact on the realization of Indigenous rights in that they communicate Indigenous grievances, help disseminate information about and build respect for Indigenous cultures, assist in creating pressure for the recognition of their rights, and in enacting new legislation for the further operationalization of their rights. For instance, the establishment of the international framework for Indigenous rights was an extensive process, based on decades of mobilization by Indigenous peoples from different countries. Specifically, the drafting and approval of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples took over two decades to finally get approval from the United Nations (Engle, 2011), after much struggle from Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous rights advocates.

Ramos (1994) critiques the way Indigenous-supportive NGOs in Brazil have become focused on some sort of the ideal Indigenous – an Indigenism based on the noble savage – using this image, *inter alia*, to seek funds from international donors. She argues it is easier to sell the image of this ideal, or hyper-real Indian, than the real flesh–blood Indian with all their real world contradictions and deceptions. In their mobilizations, Indigenous peoples also use and manipulate western perceptions of Indigeneity, enacting this image of the hyper-real Indian to help change the structural circumstances of the flesh–blood Indians in the villages. Such performances have an additional effect of raising self-consciousness and empowering the community voice; in other words, political performances contribute to the collective health of the group (Menéndez, 2003). This contribution to collective health is particularly necessary in situations of conflict and violence perpetrated against Indigenous peoples.

The question remains: Is protest necessary for Indigenous peoples to ensure that their rights are respected in the implementation of large projects? Conflicts can be very costly for everyone involved: the companies, governments and impacted communities (Davis and Franks, 2014; Davis et al., 2011). Such costs can be even higher when Indigenous peoples are affected, because conflicts in interethnic contexts are more complex and consequences are potentially graver. This can be demonstrated in the case of the Belo Monte dam, in which the construction site was blockaded several times by affected communities, resulting in judicial orders to halt work and costly delays amounting to over a year and fines from government regulatory agencies.

Respecting Indigenous rights is a basic requirement if companies and governments want to avoid conflict with Indigenous peoples. Where there is strong opposition to a given project, it might not be wise to push ahead with it, due to the high economic, ecological and social costs, as well as a potential backlash against the company. Unfortunately, international market contexts often force developing countries to implement projects despite strong community opposition. It is necessary to understand the global economy pressures on developing countries and their dynamics—in which Indigenous peoples have a very low level of power or influence.

In the Brazilian context, although the 2014 mobilization did not reach its primary goals in the short-term, important victories were ultimately achieved—such as a reply from the Presidential candidates to their requests. This demonstrates the efficacy of protests to support minority rights in democratic systems. The Indigenous struggle for recognition and realisation of their rights has progressed due to decades of protest and community mobilization. The 2014 mobilization was empowered by use of communication networks by the protestors, drawing national and international attention, building social capital among the participants and providing them with various legal and organizational skills, including better knowledge about legal frameworks that is likely to be replicated at the local community level after the mobilization.

As Jackson (2007:210) observed for Colombia, “claiming and successfully securing these rights requires a performance . . . that powerfully indexes such isolation and marginality, geographical and otherwise, in order to maximally promote the likelihood that they will continue to qualify as legitimate grantees of their rights to culture”. The various performances of the National Indigenous Mobilization referenced not only the hyper-real Indian, but also contextualized centuries of domination and contemporary legal rights documents, drawing attention to problems not being addressed by the responsible institutions. As shown here, protest performances become even more effective with the use of the mass and social media in order to amplify the audience and leverage public support for their claims. In contexts of discrepancy between law and its practical implementation, protests are likely to persist as legitimate, and perhaps the only mechanism, in which communities can gain respect for their established rights, to protect their natural environment, and consequentially to promote their well-being.

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Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2015.06.034>.

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