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Discussion Paper 8

FROM "ORTHODOXY" TO "REFORM":
EXPERIENCES OF DEPENDENT TRANSITIONAL ECONOMIES

by

Peter Utting

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Preface

The question of post-revolutionary transition to socialism in dependent economies has received all too little attention from scholars. However, with major economic reform on the agenda in a number of countries characterized by state socialism and a parallel search for new forms of democracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, there is now more widespread interest in the changes underway in socialist economies.

This paper on the transition from orthodoxy to reform in Mozambique, Viet Nam and Cuba - all dependent transitional economies - helps further our understanding of the processes involved. It examines the economic and political logic of changes which in essence represent a shift from the earlier orthodox "dualist" approach, which gave priority to "state-centred accumulation", to a strategy of "articulation" which recognizes different forms of production. As the author points out, this does not inevitably mean abandoning the principle of social control over the economy.

Following a discussion of the nature of the reforms and of the crisis, the paper examines the principal contradictions among different social groups and the state which arise from the post-revolutionary transformation of social relations and the distribution of income and wealth. A central theme running through the paper is that an adequate understanding of crisis and reform must take into account the effects of what the author refers to as contradictory class practices on the capacity of the state to mobilize and appropriate surplus, to plan and to maintain its hegemony.

There are also contradictory state practices, including that of "crowding out" of the peasantry in the structure of resource allocation and of the people's participation or power by bureaucratic and technocratic control.

State-society relations are of course a crucial factor in determining the content and direction of policy. The paper therefore reviews not only the changing social structure in each of the countries but also the forms of participation and organization which people are developing to represent their interests and exert pressure.

The paper will therefore be of interest to all those concerned with social, political and economic structures and processes which aim to achieve a degree of social control over society and the economy in the furtherance of social justice. Further light will be thrown on some of these issues in a new UNRISD project in the field of economic reform and democracy.

Dharam Ghai
Director

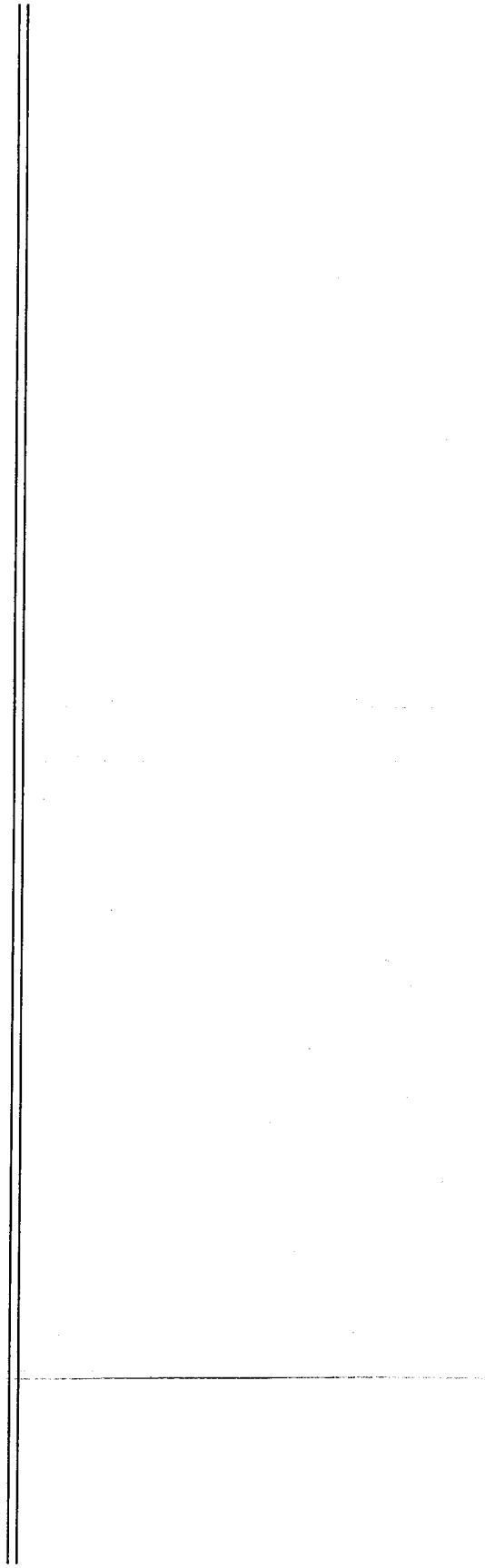


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Introduction

During the past decade, governments in several post-revolutionary Third World societies have introduced a series of economic and planning reforms that represent a significant departure from orthodox socialist principles and practice. The purpose of this paper is to analyse why this shift from "orthodoxy" to "reform" has occurred at this point in time.

I focus on the experience of a category of countries which may be labelled "dependent transitional economies" 1/, and, in particular, on the cases of Mozambique, Viet Nam and Cuba. I will also refer in passing to the experience of Nicaragua. Particular attention is paid to policy reforms affecting agriculture and the food system up until 1987.

The central argument which runs through this paper is that the reform process in these countries should not be seen simply as a pragmatic response by government leaders to economic difficulties, or as a belated attempt to correct policy "errors", or as a victory of the "reformers" over the "ideologues" in the Party/state apparatus. Rather, the reforms should be analysed in terms of a response on the part of the state to:

(a) a set of crisis conditions generated to a large extent by what may be referred to as contradictory class and state practices which undermine the capacity of the state to mobilize and appropriate surplus, plan the economy and maintain hegemony 2/, and

(b) changes in the balance of social forces which alter the capacity of different groups to influence the policy process.

The paper is divided into four sections. Part I looks very briefly at the nature of the reforms introduced, primarily in areas associated with food and agricultural policy. Part II considers a number of conventional explanations of the reform process in socialist countries and identifies certain limitations with these approaches for analysing the reforms in dependent transitional economies. Part III specifies the nature of the crisis which has prompted the reforms in these countries. Part IV presents a complementary set of explanatory variables for understanding the reform process which focus on changes which have occurred in the balance of social forces and which are themselves the product of forms of struggle, as well as changes in social structure, the organization of social groups at the level of civil society and institutionalized forms of participation.

Note: This paper is based on research currently being undertaken as part of a doctoral programme at the University of Essex, U.K. The research also forms part of a broader project co-ordinated by the United Nations Research Institute of Social Development (UNRISD) on the impact of adjustment policies on food production and food security in Third World countries.

1. The term "dependent transitional economies" refers to economies on the periphery of the world system engaged in a process of transition. The latter involves an attempt to transform social relations and structures characteristic of dependent capitalism and to subordinate patterns of production, distribution and accumulation to social and economic priorities determined by a more or less centralized planning process (Fagen, Deere and Coraggio, 1986). Historically, these economies supplied raw materials to develop a broad industrial base. The reproduction of the economy during the post-revolutionary period has remained highly dependent on external markets and aid.

2. Hegemony is defined here in the Gramscian sense and refers to the system of relations between classes and social groups whereby power is secured, not through coercion, but on the basis of a broad popular consensus, achieved through political, intellectual and moral leadership (Gramsci, 1971).



1. The Nature of the Reforms

Central features of orthodox socialist development have generally been associated with direct state control of the "commanding heights" of the economy; centralized planning; high rates of accumulation associated with infrastructural development, rapid industrialization (or agro-industrialization) and the technification of agriculture; collectivization of rural producers; and large-scale state subsidies. The nature of what may be called for convenience sake "state-centred accumulation models" has undergone a number of significant changes with the introduction of economic and food policy reforms.

In the case of dependent transitional economies considered here, these reforms have generally been associated with several or all of the following aspects. Firstly, they have promoted a degree of denationalization or decollectivization which has provided a greater space for petty commodity producers and traders, and in the case of Mozambique, and Nicaragua, capitalist farmers. Secondly, major changes in domestic pricing and marketing policies have been introduced to rearticulate marketing circuits and alter relative prices both to stimulate marketed agricultural production and eliminate distortionary effects associated with wastage and inefficiency. Thirdly, changes have occurred in the sectoral allocation of resources in an attempt to correct imbalances favouring heavy industry and/or large-scale, slow yielding development projects and increase the availability of consumer goods and resources for short-term production. Fourthly, reforms in monetary, fiscal and exchange rate policy have taken place in order to reduce government subsidies and deficits, restore the value of the national currency and overcome distortionary effects associated with the overvaluation of the latter. Finally, planning and economic management systems have been decentralized in order to improve efficiency.

In the areas of food and agricultural policy the reform process in Mozambique, Viet Nam and Cuba has assumed the following characteristics:

Mozambique

Significant changes in economic and food policy were introduced in Mozambique in 1983 following the adoption of a new policy line at FRELIMO's Fourth Congress which sought to direct more resources (credit, land, inputs and consumer goods) towards peasant and private producers and expand the production of essential manufactured goods. Changes also occurred in the composition of imports as consumer goods increased their share of total imports from a fifth in 1982 to a third in 1984. In the context of an increasing balance of trade deficit, imports of machinery and intermediate goods declined sharply during that period. Changes in the composition of imports were reflected in changes in the accumulation/consumption balance. The investment ratio declined from 20 per cent of GDP in both 1981 and 1982 to 15 per cent in 1983 (Mackintosh and Wuyts, 1988).

A more gradual approach towards the collectivization of rural producers was adopted and a number of state farms were broken up and their land distributed to individual farmers (Littlejohn, 1988; Mackintosh, 1986). State farms were to play a greater role in supporting other forms of production through support services. The expanded flow of resources to private farmers was linked to increased procurement for the state through a system of contracts. Significant increases in agricultural producer prices were announced and several food product markets were de-regulated. By 1987, only prices of staples such as rice and maize continued to be set by the government (Mackintosh and Wuyts, 1988; Ottaway, 1988). Controls of private wholesale trade, notably, restrictions on the inter-provincial movement of goods, were also lifted. The number of outlets - notably retail co-operatives - for marketing agricultural inputs and consumer goods, was also expanded, as were the number of state procurement posts.

Viet Nam

In Viet Nam, the reform process began in 1979 when the Vietnamese Communist Party adopted a new policy line which recognized the importance of small-scale peasant or "family" farming in economic development and the need to increase the allocation of resources to that sector. Measures were introduced in 1981 which transferred control of certain agricultural activities away from the co-operative to the peasant household 3/ (White C., 1983; Werner, 1984). Co-operative land was sub-contracted to teams of co-operative members or peasant households which were obliged to deliver a fixed quota to the state but could then sell any surplus product on the open market. By the beginning of 1984 an estimated 90 per cent of the collective organizations in the country had adopted the "contract farming system".

3. In North Viet Nam, an estimated 95 per cent of all peasant families were organized in co-operatives by the mid-1970s. The peasantry accounted for nearly 90 per cent of the national population.

A more flexible approach was adopted towards collectivization in the south. Less emphasis was placed on the organization of producers in large-scale "higher level" collectives, while smaller "semi-socialist" "solidarity" or production teams were encouraged. Between 1982 and 1984 the proportion of the total farming population of the south integrated in co-operatives of different types increased from 15 to 45 per cent.

Both official and open market prices for agricultural produce increased significantly during the early and mid-1980s (Spoor, 1988) while producers were able to obtain limited quantities of manufactured goods at regulated prices through the state channels. The new policies sought to increase the availability of essential products. The accumulation rate fell from the historic levels recorded in the north (Democratic Republic of Viet Nam) of approximately 25 per cent of gross social product to around 14 per cent in 1982 (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam). Throughout the 1980s, economic plans prioritized programmes associated with the production of food, consumer goods and export products. Cooperatives engaged in handicraft and light industrial production were encouraged to increase their output of clothing, household utensils, work implements and basic means of transportation.

During the 1980s, state control over procurement of staple food products (principally rice) declined. As early as 1982 the state reduced its commitment to supply the population with cheap food. In 1985 measures were adopted which reduced coupon subsidies - the system through which workers and cadres were partly paid in coupons which could be exchanged for cheap food. Instead the cash component of wages increased and workers were obliged to buy food at higher prices. In the context of rapid inflation and declining living standards, however, rationing was reintroduced on eight basic products in January 1986. In 1987 restrictions were lifted on long-distance trade and the flow of food and raw materials through private channels to urban areas. Measures were also taken that year to index wages to movements in the retail price index.

Cuba

In Cuba, economic policy reforms were introduced very gradually from the early 1970s onwards. The reform movement became more pronounced during the early 1980s but several reform initiatives came to an abrupt halt in 1986 when the so-called "rectification" process began.

The reforms of the early 1980s centred on increased material incentives and a partial "freeing-up" of the market. Minimum wages were increased and a bonus system introduced (Ghai et al., 1986). Labour was increasingly organized in work brigades which entered into contractual arrangements with the enterprise. Contracts provided for certain economic incentives and allowed the brigade members to organize their own work process. By 1985 over 1,200 brigades had been formed, primarily in agricultural enterprises (Zimbalist and Eckstein, 1987).

Reforms affecting the official price system were introduced in an attempt to curb the growth of excess demand. At the end of 1981 retail prices of many food products and other basic consumer items were increased for the first time since 1962. More important, however, were measures designed to increase the supply of consumer goods and services. Export quotas on certain product lines such as citrus fruits and juices were relaxed to increase domestic supply. The quantity and variety of goods sold on the state-controlled "parallel" market expanded considerably. Increases in consumption were reflected in a decline of the investment ratio which fell from 18.7 per cent of Gross Social Product in 1977 to 14 per cent in 1983.

One of the most important measures affecting the distribution and consumption of consumer goods related to the partial elimination of controls on the private sale of certain consumer goods such as handicrafts and, in particular, food. During 1980 and 1981 "free peasant markets" were created in each of the country's 169 municipalities. Officially, private farmers and co-operatives were obliged to use the markets to sell directly to consumers, although in practice, intermediaries became involved. Before selling in the markets agricultural producers had first to meet certain (generally limited) quotas for the sale of produce at official prices to the state (Benjamin et al. 1984).

While the peasant markets provided farmers with an opportunity to increase considerably their income, they accounted for only approximately 5 per cent of national food production. As new contradictions emerged, trading in the markets was suspended for some months during 1982 and 1983 and eventually abolished indefinitely in 1986 when the "rectification" process began.

2. Conventional Explanations

At the risk of oversimplifying, it can be said that most of the literature which analyses the phenomenon of economic policy reform in socialist countries does so in terms of one or a combination of four types of explanations.

The central focus has clearly been on the need to resolve problems and distortions and which result from policies or planning imbalances which characterize orthodox state-centred accumulation models. Particular attention has been paid to the negative or distortionary effects (low labour productivity, stagnation, inefficiency and waste of resources) of "accumulation bias" (Kalecki, 1986; FitzGerald, 1988); centralized planning and fixed price systems and subsidies (Brus, 1972; Ellman, 1979; Nove, 1983); the prioritization of state sector enterprises and the operation of "soft-budget constraints" 4/ (Kornai, 1980; FitzGerald and Wuyts, 1988).

A second approach has emphasized the relationship between reform and relations with the world market and, particularly, the advanced capitalist countries. Particularly important are conditions associated with the need to penetrate world markets and obtain Western technology and finance, the penetration of Western cultural influences, the debt problem, deteriorating terms of trade, as well as a variety of pressures brought to bear by agencies and institutions associated with the advanced capitalist economies (Petras and Selden, 1981).

A third approach, related to the former, has tended to see the reform process as corresponding to a particular phase of socialist development. As economies become more complex and diversified as popular demands for manufactured consumer goods increase, so it becomes necessary to increase efficiency, diversify production and improve quality control by relying to a greater extent on material incentives, private initiative and decentralized planning systems (White G., 1983; Ghose, 1984). With a higher level of development of the productive forces it also becomes possible to lower the accumulation rate and increase the supply of consumer goods and material incentives (Turists, 1987).

A fourth approach (commonly found in many journalistic accounts of the reform process and inside the covers of several Western political science journals) emphasizes the question of power struggles and/or ideological changes affecting the leadership of the ruling party. The reforms in the Soviet Union or China, for example, are often analysed in terms of a victory of the "pragmatists" over the "ideologues". Particular

4. The term "soft-budget constraint" is used by Kornai to refer to the situation characteristic of socialist economies where state enterprises enjoy easy access to state finance and subsidies (Kornai, 1980). Considerations of profitability or own-savings do not constitute key deteminants of access to funds. This tends to result in high levels of investment and enables state enterprises easy access to consumer goods and services. As FitzGerald points out, this has the dual effect of squeezing the quantity of inputs available for the production of consumer goods and goods available for household consumption (FitzGerald, 1988).

attention is focused on the relationship between reform and ideological changes which have occurred when a new leader emerges. Hence the reform process in these two countries is often explained with reference to the "innovative" presence of Gorbachev and Deng Xiaoping.

These latter two approaches do not appear particularly useful for analysing the reform process in dependent transitional economies such as Mozambique, Viet Nam and Nicaragua where the levels of development of the productive forces are extremely low and where the nature of the major problems facing the economy and society appear qualitatively different to those of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and China. In all four of the countries referred to in this paper, significant reforms have been introduced without any major changes having taken place in the leadership of the Party.

As indicated in the Introduction, one of the central themes running through this paper is that an adequate understanding of crisis and reform must also take into account the effects of contradictory class practices on the capacity of the state to mobilize and appropriate surplus, plan and maintain hegemony. Much of the discussion surrounding economic policy reform in socialist countries involves the so-called "plan" versus "market" debate and the question of how to articulate different forms of property/production within the framework of a socialist development strategy.

One of the key questions here concerns relations between the state and agrarian petty commodity producers. The post-revolutionary state has traditionally sought to appropriate large quantities of surplus from the peasant/agricultural sector in order to finance industrialization and the growth of the socialist sector of the economy, as well as to provide cheap food for the urban working class and other groups such as the bureaucracy and the army. At the same time the state has attempted to develop agriculture through increases in productivity and the transformation of social relations. Such attempts have often been resisted by large sectors of the peasantry which have, in many instances, responded by reducing levels of marketed surplus.

This scenario of conflicting or contradictory interests involves also other major actors on the post-revolutionary stage. Crucial to the whole development issue is the question of the domestic terms of trade and the quantity of manufactured goods made available for peasant consumption. Increasing the supply of such goods to rural areas and/or increasing food producer prices may run counter to the interests of an urban working class and a bureaucracy concerned with access to cheap food and access to manufactured products. The technocracy (or fractions thereof) may favour not only a high accumulation rate and restrictions on consumption but also investment in heavy industry and imports of machinery as opposed to industries producing the types of basic manufactures required in rural areas or imports of consumer goods and inputs for peasant production.

The relative strength of different interest groups is crucially linked to fundamental structural changes which characterize post-revolutionary societies. The redistribution of income and wealth, rapid industrialization, agricultural modernization and transformation, expanding the role of the state - all imply major changes in social structure. Post-revolutionary transformation also implies new forms of representation and organization of the mass of the population. Revolutions of national liberation against colonial domination or dictatorship tend to provide a greater space for mass participation in the policy process. Such developments affect in a differential manner the capacity of different groups to influence the process of policy design.

Post-revolutionary development inevitably involves, in addition, significant changes in the mode of insertion of the transitional economy in the world economy. This process generally expresses itself in a struggle between the revolutionary state and a world or regional power with economic and geo-political interests in the transitional society. Domestic class forces and other social groups, as well as foreign capital and governments, align themselves in different ways to what are, in effect, alternative societal "projects". (Nuñez, 1987).

The way, then, in which major interest groups relate to issues associated with surplus appropriation and transformation is likely to be contradictory. These contradictions express themselves in different types of practices or forms of struggle that give rise to a set of crisis conditions which necessitate profound policy changes. The precise direction of those changes, however, will be determined to a large extent by changes which have taken place in the balance of social forces.

3. The Nature of the Crisis

One of the key roles assumed by many post-revolutionary states is to "guarantee" the resources required both for basic needs provisioning and accumulation. The establishment of a state enterprise or co-operative sector and a state-controlled procurement system for acquiring surplus, the nationalization of foreign trade, and the imposition of regulations governing the acquisition and use of aid constitute key mechanisms through which food and raw materials are appropriated by the state.

In the period leading up to the reforms, serious problems associated with levels of domestic food and agricultural production, state procurement, export revenues and aid arose in all four countries. Particularly serious in the case of Mozambique, Viet Nam and Nicaragua was the situation regarding basic needs provisioning.

In Mozambique, registered marketed production fell sharply during the early 1980s, per capita cereals production declined by 20 per cent between 1979 and 1982 (FAO, 1986), while the visible trade deficit nearly doubled between 1978 and 1982, reaching approximately 600 million dollars in the latter year. In Viet Nam, levels of aid declined considerably during the latter half of the 1970s and per capita cereals production fell by 15 per cent between 1974 and 1978 (ibid.).

In Cuba, the precise nature of the problems faced by the state in relation to resource mobilization and surplus appropriation varied according to different phases of a very gradual and piecemeal reform process. The reforms of the 1970s were preceded by a period of general economic stagnation and declining export revenues which according to Zimbalist and Eckstein necessitated a shift from an externally-based accumulation strategy to one which relied more on the domestic mobilization of resources (Zimbalist and Eckstein, 1987). During the late 1970s, i.e. prior to the intensification of the reform process during the early 1980s, problems of low labour productivity and consumer dissatisfaction linked to shortages of non-essential goods, were prevalent.

A second aspect of the crisis which prompted the reforms related to the incapacity of the Party/state to direct the process of economic development and social change. In analysing this contradiction it would seem useful to identify two specific sets of crisis conditions related to the questions of planning and hegemony. As indicated earlier, the types of socialist development strategies pursued by these countries stressed the need for centralized planning, state or collective control of much of the means of production and exchange, and the concentration of investment in the state enterprise sector so that production, distribution and accumulation would conform to socially determined priorities. In this way, the Party/state would direct the transition from dependent capitalism to socialism by closely regulating the development of the productive forces and the transformation of social relations.

In the case of the four countries referred to here, the state encountered serious limitations on the extent to which this level of "direction" could be achieved. This was particularly so in the case of Mozambique, Viet Nam and Nicaragua where conditions associated with inflation, the growth of parallel markets and informal sector activities undermined the capacity of the state to regulate production and circulation. In Cuba, serious planning problems preceded the reforms of the 1970s. The limited capacity of the state to substitute the activities of some 56 thousand private agents expropriated in 1968 led to the proliferation of black market activities. Other conditions resulted in widespread inefficiency and low labour productivity in state enterprises which in turn restricted the quantity and quality of goods produced. A number of these problems were to continue over the next decade and underpin the rationale behind measures which established the free peasant markets and increased reliance on material incentives.

The capacity of states in transitional societies to direct the process of economic development and social change depends not only on its technical and administrative capacity to regulate the mobilization and flow of resources but also on the extent to which the revolutionary party can exercise leadership on the basis of a broad popular consensus. Hegemony, then, as defined in the Gramscian sense, is essential for the effective implementation of government policies and programmes. If the ruling position of the dominant group is maintained through coercion, as opposed to consensus, Party/state directives regarding production and procurement are likely to be undermined, popular mobilization

campaigns may well be ineffectual, and counter-revolutionary groups are likely to operate to greater effect.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s the hegemony of the Vietnamese Communist Party was considerably undermined. The picture that emerges is one of widespread cynicism and passive resistance in the south, coupled with sporadic guerrilla activities in the Central Highlands, and even occasional public demonstrations in certain cities of the north (Post, 1982). This was also a period when the credibility of the Party was undermined through corruption and inefficiency of certain cadres and bureaucrats.

A somewhat similar picture emerges in Mozambique at the same time. Widespread apathy and cynicism amongst the rural population (which acccounts for approximately 80 per cent of the total population) led to a situation of peasant demobilization (Saul, 1985). In factories and state farms problems of worker apathy set in, while popular support for the revolutionary government declined as bureaucratic corruption and inefficiency became more widespread. As one writer explains, the Party lost the one resource it could count on during the immediate post-Independence (1975) period, namely, "the ability ... to mobilize and organize popular participation and popular forces in order to generate self-reliant solutions to problems" (Pinsky, 1985:281).

In Cuba, discontent, associated with a fairly generalized "dissatisfaction with the limits of consumption" (Benjamin et al., 1984) emerged during the late 1970s. This was manifested clearly during the 1980s boatlifts when over 120,000 people left for the United States. Even more serious problems, of this nature, however, were to emerge during the reform period itself and were to play a part in decisions to halt the trend towards liberalization. Sectors of the working class and the co-operativized peasantry became increasingly critical of policies which led to rapid income and class differentiation, widespread abuses which characterized policy implementation, and a Party which had failed to take an active role in dealing with these and other problems associated with bureaucratic inefficiency and privilege.

Contradictory Class Practices

As indicated earlier, processes of post-revolutionary transformation of social relations and the distribution of income and wealth generate profound contradictions among different social groups and the state. Given that transition also implies the transformation of dependency relations, conflict inevitably develops between the revolutionary state and certain foreign interests which attempt to defend the economic, geo-political or ideological domination they formerly exercised in the transitional society. The crisis conditions outlined above are intimately linked to these contradictions.

The fundamental contradiction which has conditioned development prospects in Mozambique, Viet Nam, Cuba and Nicaragua throughout much of their post-revolutionary history, has centred on the conflict between the revolutionary state and a foreign power - notably, South

Africa in the case of Mozambique, and the United States in the case of the other three countries. The four countries considered here have had to endure diverse forms of external aggression involving direct intervention of military forces, so-called "low-intensity" wars involving the use of proxy guerilla forces, economic embargo/blockade measures, and diplomatic offensives to undermine support from third parties (governments, international development and finance agencies, etc.) for a particular revolutionary government. Pressures such as these have major implications for the problems of surplus appropriation, planning and hegemony referred to above.

Concerning the question of contradictory practices engaged in by domestic social groups, two, in particular, have played a major role in contributing to the crisis of the state. The first relates to what may be called a process of "mercantilization" (Nuñez, 1987) through which an increasing number of wage labourers, peasants and bureaucrats leave the enterprise, land and office, respectively, to engage in petty commodity production, usually, in urban areas. To the extent that such a process restricts agricultural and industrial production, so it affects the capacity of the state to appropriate surplus.

The proliferation of these activities both undermines the possibility of planning since it implies, in practice, the expansion of markets outside the control of the plan, and impedes the growth of the state sector by draining it of products and labour. It may also lead to tensions between the state and this sector of the population, often drawn from classes and groups previously allied to the revolutionary project. As such, mercantilization not only undermines planning but also hegemony. This latter effect will be reinforced if, as has occurred to varying degrees in the countries considered here, the moral authority of the party is undermined by the increasing involvement of bureaucrats and cadres in black market activities.

The second class practice which underlies the crisis of the state is associated with the reduction of surplus and/or the diversion of the latter away from official procurement channels. In the case of the countries considered here, this practice would appear to have three central aspects: firstly, the tendency of certain sectors of the peasantry in a shortage or war economy to revert to subsistence production and reduce levels of marketed surplus; secondly, the tendency of different types of agricultural producers to divert marketed produce from official state channels to the "open" or "black" market; and thirdly, the tendency of the working class (as well as poor peasants employed as temporary labourers) to reduce levels of surplus labour through a reduction in the intensity of labour or the period of time worked.

Contradictory State Practices

Contradictory practices which contribute to the crisis of the state relate not only to the activities of groups and agents (both national and foreign) attempting to defend their class interests or regain their dominant pre-revolutionary position, but also to actions taken by the state.

These may serve in the first instance, to alienate classes or social groups allied in practice (through consensus and participation) and/or in theory (according to party ideology) to the revolutionary project; or through patterns of resource allocation which undermine, rather than promote, the development of the productive forces. The literature mentioned earlier, concerned with the question of systemic constraints, basically refers to this latter aspect.

When analysing the former aspect, it is useful to refer to the concept of "crowding out" which has been used to describe state/peasant relations and the tendency of the state to displace the peasantry in the structure of resource allocation (Wuyts, 1988; FitzGerald, 1988). Both for ideological reasons (the perceived superiority of state/collective forms of production) and institutional reasons (the operation of the "soft-budget constraint") state enterprises are given the authority and the purchasing power necessary to obtain the goods they require at the expense of other sectors. The "crowding out" of the peasantry, however, can also be the effect of a certain "urban bias" which may characterize patterns of resource allocation. This latter aspect was particularly evident in the cases of Mozambique and Nicaragua (Egero, 1987; Utting, 1988).

It would seem useful, however, to broaden the concept somewhat to refer to two other spheres where "crowding out" may be said to operate. The first relates to the accumulation/consumption balance and the tendency for consumption to be squeezed as a result of the phenomen of "accumulation bias" which tends to characterize orthodox socialist development strategy. This aspect of "crowding out" affects, of course, not only the access of the peasantry to essential goods and services but also that of other social groups. To the extent that accumulation bias restricts the availability of goods which may act as material incentives, this phenomenon can also affect labour productivity.

Another area where "crowding out" may be said to occur relates to the question of control over decision-making processes, more specifically the phenomenon whereby popular participation or "people's power" is crowded out by bureaucratic/technocratic control. The latter aspect was particularly evident in Mozambique and Cuba during certain periods leading up to the reforms of the 1980s.

Contradictory state practices which undermine the development of the productive forces relate primarily to problems of low productivity, inefficiency and waste in the state/collective sector which are linked to the operation of the soft-budget constraint, fixed price systems, overvalued exchange rates, as well as restrictions on the availability of material incentives. Such problems have been particularly evident in countries like Viet Nam and Cuba.

From the perspective of the post-revolutionary state, the transition from orthodoxy to reform has both an economic and a political logic. The former expresses itself in terms of a shift from what has been called a "dualist" strategy to one of "articulation" (FitzGerald, 1988). The dualist approach which characterized orthodox socialist development

strategy prioritized the modern state or socialized sector of the economy and attempted either to absorb (through employment in state enterprises), suppress (through prohibition of private trade, nationalization, expropriation), rapidly transform (through collectivization), or restrict/stifle (through primitive socialist accumulation) 5/ the "traditional" sector of the economy comprised of urban and rural petty commodity producers (including traders) or capitalist producers.

In contrast to this approach, articulation admits the longer term co-existence of different forms of production and the need to create conditions conducive to the extended reproduction of petty commodity and private forms so as to stimulate production and the flow of goods and services (ibid). While this implies a reduction in the degree of direct state or collective control over production and exchange, it does not inevitably mean abandoning the principle of social control over the economy.

The political logic behind the reforms may be expressed in terms of the Gramscian distinction between "domination" and "hegemony" or the struggle for hegemony between two opposing groups or blocs of social forces. Whereas "domination" implies the imposition of the ideology of the dominant group on the rest of society and exercising power through various forms of coercion, "hegemony" implies consensus, "national unity", building a system of class alliances and making economic-corporate sacrifices in order to promote the "development of all the national energies" (Gramsci, 1971:182).

5. Preobrazhensky's concept of "primitive socialist accumulation" refers to measures necessary to obtain the resources to support accumulation and the growth of the socialist sector of the economy. The concept of PSA stresses the need to squeeze agriculture and the peasantry through "unequal exchange" or the manipulation of the domestic terms of trade through a system of fixed prices for agricultural and industrial products (Preobrazhensky, 1965).

4. Changes in the Balance of Social Forces

While the reform process has generally emerged in the context of a crisis of the state, the fact that a crisis occurs need not tell us much about the nature of the reforms. An interesting historical example in this respect is the experience of the Soviet Union during the first post-revolutionary decade. The latter was characterized by periodic crises which assumed many similar characteristics in terms of low levels of production and procurement, as well as social unrest. The response of the party/state in each situation was, however, very different.

In 1918, the Bolshevik Party responded by attempting to intensify class struggle in the countryside introducing measures which favoured the poor peasants and which squeezed the rich peasants. In the context of a new crisis situation in 1920, however, the New Economic Policy (NEP) was introduced in two major phases which increasingly benefited the rich peasantry. Towards the end of the 1920s a serious procurement crisis re-emerged. The response this time, was to abandon the NEP and introduce forced collectivization.

Bettelheim makes the point in his analysis of the NEP that the content of the policy changes was determined by three main factors: theoretical analysis, the lessons of experience and the demands of the masses (Bettelheim, 1978). The lessons of experience would seem to refer here not only to recognizing past "mistakes" in policy design and implementation, but also to a more realistic assessment of the capacity of the party/state to direct and transform the economy in the context of

existing structures, levels of development of the productive forces and international relations.

In considering the question of the demands of the masses and the capacity of different social groups to influence the policy process, it is important to examine (a) the type of class practices referred to above and their effects on the state, (b) changes occurring in social structure and at the level of civil society, and (c) the extent and forms of participation of different social groups in decision-making processes associated with policy design. It is to these latter two aspects that we now turn our attention.

Social Structure, Civil Society and Participation

In all four countries, major changes in social structure had occurred during the pre-reform period. The important point, however, when dealing with the question of changes in the balance of social forces is not merely that of the quantitative growth of particular social groups, but developments affecting state-society relations, notably in the areas of civil society and participation. It is necessary to look at the way in which the individuals who compose such groups associate and organize in institutions such as trade unions, mass organizations, producer associations, consumer groups, professional organizations, and so forth.

This type of analysis is important in three respects. First, it tells us something about the capacity of such groups to articulate interests and constitute themselves as "pressure groups". Second, the expansion of these institutions opens up the possibility for qualitative changes in the mode of leadership of the ruling group - away from domination/coercion, towards "hegemony"/consensus. Third, the restricted development of the institutions of civil society partially explains why state-centred models tend to be quickly put in place during the post-revolutionary phase. The relative absence of such institutions in underdeveloped societies means that in the context of a defeated or severely weakened bourgeoisie, the autonomy and intervention of the politico-administrative apparatus of the state is likely to be that much greater. Moreover, the fact that such institutions tend to be more developed in urban, rather than in rural, areas partially explains the feature of "urban bias" which characterizes many post-revolutionary development strategies.

In assessing the capacity of different social groups to influence the policy process, it is important also to consider the question of institutionalized forms of participation in decision making associated with the process of policy design. Data on these aspects is generally quite limited, particularly in the case of Mozambique. It is possible, though, to identify a number of relevant characteristics and tendencies.

Mozambique

In Mozambique, the principle of participatory democracy was a central feature of post-revolutionary development strategy. While several important participatory institutions and practices emerged during the latter half of the 1970s, the principle of democratic centralism, as well

as the ongoing influence of colonial attitudes and social relations, often meant in practice that "commandism" gained the upper hand. In addition, the distinction between the role of the vanguard party and the state became increasingly blurred.

The party began to reassert a more independent position in 1980 when problems associated with corruption, bureaucratic inefficiency, worker apathy and rural demobilization became more apparent (Saul, 1984). In response, FRELIMO launched the "Political and Organizational Offensive" which attempted to strengthen the party and revitalize participatory practices. In 1982, this process culminated in the launching of a national dialogue in preparation for FRELIMO's Fourth Congress, where the new policy line favouring reform was confirmed. As pointed out by one writer: "More than anything else, it was by holding thousands of meetings throughout the country... that the leaders realized the anger and resentment that had been growing up because of the economic problems in rural areas" (Hanlon, 1984:146).

Given that the central thrust of the reforms was geared towards stimulating private agricultural production, it is important when analysing the intervention of different social groups in the policy process to differentiate peasant interests. While little information exists on this aspect, there is some evidence to suggest that rich peasants were influential in many areas of the country, not least because of the fact that, unlike most of the rural male population, they enjoyed stable residence and did not have to migrate in search of work (O'Laughlin, 1981). In certain areas of the south, social differentiation among the rural population (which during the pre-revolutionary period remained extremely limited among the indigenous population) had intensified. The expansion of agriculture in the Green Zones around Maputo, for example, saw certain rural families with some capital (usually acquired from employment in the mines in South Africa) take up commercial farming in order to supply the urban market.

Government support for rich peasant/private farmers appears to have been founded on what, one writer points out, was a problematic twofold assumption. It was assumed, firstly, that private farmers were capable of producing the type of rapid results needed in a shortage economy, and secondly, that poor and middle peasants were not involved in commodity relations (Littlejohn, 1988).

Perceptions such as these were reinforced by considerable pressures from certain Western donors, which built up during the early 1980s when the revolutionary government came to rely increasingly on Western aid to deal with an increasing balance of trade deficit. In 1984, Mozambique opened relations with or began to receive aid from the IMF, the World Bank and USAID. Such agencies stressed the need to reduce the role of the state in the economy, devalue the currency, cut subsidies and promote the development of the private sector (Ottaway, 1988).

In analysing the political economy of the reform process in Mozambique, it is important to refer also to other changes that occurred in the

balance of social forces. During 1982 FRELIMO launched an "offensive" against the so-called "internal class enemy", seen as undermining the possibility of socialist development. During the late 1970s, two social groups rapidly increased their control over the means of production and exchange, considerably improved their material position and increasingly marginalized workers and peasants in the structure of resource allocation.

These groups, which FRELIMO labelled the "aspirants to the bourgeoisie", consisted of what one writer calls the "commercial group" (private commercial capital accumulated largely through the black market) and the "state group" (a technocratic élite within the bureaucracy) (Hanlon, 1984). An alliance of these groups was broken during the early 1980s when much of the bureaucracy came to see the black market as impeding rather than assisting the reproduction of urban middle class households. The position or legitimacy of the technocratic élite was also weakened when it became apparent that many of the plans, programmes and policies it proposed were clearly inappropriate.

As popular discontent rose, the party itself initiated actions to curb the power of both groups. Some have interpreted the reforms in Mozambique as an attempt by the technocratic élite within the state apparatus to defend its position. As Hanlon explains, this would be achieved by: "joining with workers and peasants against speculative capital... (and trying) to move commercial capital into production while it supported and tried to create rich peasants as new potential allies ..." (Hanlon, 1984:209).

Viet Nam

In analysing the crisis of the state and the nature of the reform process, in Viet Nam it is crucial to examine state co-operative relations. Unlike the bulk of the rural population in Mozambique, Cuba and Nicaragua, the peasant population in pre-revolutionary Viet Nam was organized in fairly cohesive village/communal structures which increased the capacity of the peasantry to defend their interests (Fforde and Paine, 1987). The peasantry engaged in various forms of "avoidance and non-co-operation strategies" (Fforde, 1984) associated, for example, with tax evasion and failure to repay loans, which undermined the capacity of the state to appropriate surplus.

While developments during the late 1950s and the first half of the 1960s, associated with collectivization, the creation of state trading monopolies and the rapid expansion of the bureaucracy, facilitated control by the central state apparatus, the state/commune dichotomy was subsequently reinforced during the war years (1965-73) as co-operatives became more autonomous.

This scenario presents an image of considerable tension between the central state apparatus intent on implementing a state-centred accumulation model and the peasantry. There is, however, another interpretation which differentiates peasant interests and raises the question of

class struggle among different sectors of the peasantry and divisions within the party/state apparatus. From the mid-1960s onwards, the rich peasantry came to dominate many of the co-operative managerial committees. This happened as an increasing number of rich peasant families joined co-operatives while at the same time cadres and activists working at the village level diverted their attention towards the war effort. These developments served to undermine collective relations. Income differentials increased, democratic practices were weakened and considerable areas of co-operative land were used privately (Gordon, 1982).

Despite being declared illegal in 1969, the private use of collective lands continued, with a degree of support from local level cadres and functionaries (Post, 1982). As one writer explains, the weak link in the control of the central state apparatus tended to be the local party/state officials, who often sided with the co-operatives rather than the central apparatus, particularly during difficult crop years during the late 1970s, prior to the introduction of the reforms (Post, 1982). On the basis of these observations, it could be argued that the policy reforms associated with sub-contracting of land and free trade did not introduce new relations of production and exchange in any qualitative sense but essentially legalized and expanded a de facto situation.

Important changes had also occurred in the social composition of the party and the central administrative apparatus of the state. During the 1970s and 1980s the number of cadres and civil servants with training in economics and direct experience in economic management grew and assumed a more prominent role (White C., 1983). Such groups became increasingly critical of a development model based on extensive state control, high accumulation rates and centralized planning and management methods, and proposed greater enterprise autonomy, the increased use of material incentives and an expanded role for small scale private/family enterprises.

Data on employment in North Viet Nam show that the number of "scientific, technical and economic management" cadres increased from 18,400 in 1960 to 429,500 in 1975. The rate of growth of this group far exceeded that of the industrial working class, which increased from 124,100 to 405,000 over the same period.

In relation to the other countries considered here, it would seem that the capacity of different social groups to operate as effective pressure groups and influence more directly the policy design process through institutionalized forms of participation was more limited in the case of Viet Nam. Several writers agree that while democratic practices had developed considerably at the grassroots level or in the work place, local level or mass organizations appear to have had little direct influence on decision-making processes at the higher levels of the party/state apparatus (Bhaduri and Rahman, 1982; Deere, 1986; White C., 1985).

Cuba

In the case of Cuba, there is considerable debate over the degree of participation of the mass of the population in the planning and policy

process (Leogrande, 1981). By the late 1970s, three of the main institutional channels for expressing demands associated with greater availability of goods and basic services were mass organizations such as the Committees in Defense of the Revolution (CDRs) which, as Lowy observes, "have managed to organize and mobilize the masses more effectively and more broadly than any other institution" (Lowy, 1986: 274); the Confederation of Cuban Workers; and the local organs of People's Power whose elected representatives hold periodic meetings with their constitutents. According to Zimbalist and Eckstein, "Available information suggests that local meetings are concerned primarily with discussions of bureaucratic deficiencies, including consumer scarcities and complaints about urban services" (Zimbalist and Eckstein, 1987:12).

While most writers stress the hierarchical and centralized nature of the Cuban political and planning process, they differ on the degree of participation. It would seem, however, that processes of consultation were institutionalized at different levels and became more effective throughout the late 1970s.

What, though, was the nature of popular demands? In relation to the emergence of the free peasant markets, it is clear that consumer discontent and demands associated with the need to improve the variety and quality of food played an important role in prompting these reforms (Benjamin et al., 1984). Pressures favouring liberalization of food marketing were also brought to bear by the national association of small co-operativized agricultural producers. When the free peasant markets were introduced in 1980, the organization was dominated by private interests. This balance of forces, however, changed considerably during the early 1980s and was instrumental in bringing about the closure of the peasant markets.

More generally, the reforms of the early 1980s, involving not only the free peasant markets but also greater reliance on material incentives, reflected the rise of urban middle class interests. The strengthening of demands of this type related partly to the fact that important basic needs associated with essential food products, health and education had, to a large extent, been met. Also, increased links with the "world's foremost consumer society" (ibid, 1984) highlighted the wide gap in material living standards between Cuba and the United States.

The rise of such demands, however, was also linked to changes which had occurred in Cuban social structure. Here we see that "white collar" workers, and technical and professional personnel associated particularly with the so-called non-productive service sector of the economy, expanded rapidly during the 1970s - this latter group increasing from 622 thousand in 1970 to 934 thousand in 1979, or nearly 30 per cent of the total labour force (Brundenius, 1984).

This period also saw the growth of a technocratic group within the state apparatus interested in applying new economic management and planning methods to resolve the country's economic problems. In his speeches justifying the policy shift away from liberalization expressed in

the "rectification" process, Castro stressed the role of this group in the reform process. The rectification process represented an attack on technocratic and bureaucratic planning methods which, the party believed, had prioritized economic growth at the expense of social development and had failed to recognize the potential contribution which mass mobilization campaigns and voluntary labour could make to development. These methods, Castro argued, were a reflection of the growing pervasiveness of the "petty bourgeois spirit", particularly in Havana (Castro, 1987:2). The rectification process was clearly an attempt to reassert the dominance of the "proletarian spirit".

The Cuban reforms were far more partial and piecemeal than those of the other countries reviewed here. In accounting for these differences, journalists and writers often refer to such factors as the ideological purity or rigidity of the party leadership. Two other conditions, though, specific to the Cuban social formation, need to be considered.

The first concerns the very different social structure of Cuba, where the majority of the population is urban-based and employed as wage or salaried workers by the state. Unlike the other countries considered in this paper, the small-scale farming population (whether in co-operatives or operating as private farmers) represents only a small percentage of the economically active population and does not constitute a major social force. Moreover, the size of the private farming sector diminished considerably during the 1970s, from 235 thousand private farmers in 1970 to just 136 thousand in 1979, or just 17 per cent of the agricultural labour force.

The second condition relates to the levels of development of the productive forces and the nature of the so-called "crisis". We do not see in Cuba the same scale of problems or distortions, reflected in chronic shortages of essential food and consumer goods, spiralling inflation and the proliferation of black market activities, as that which occurred in Mozambique, Viet Nam and Nicaragua. By the beginning of the 1980s, agriculture was highly mechanized, large infrastructural needs had been met and the country had diversified its industrial base to a considerable degree (Brundenius, 1987; Turits, 1987).

The implications of this situation for our analysis are threefold. It relieved pressures on sustaining high rates of accumulation and permitted a "freeing up" of consumption. It also affected the content of the reforms. The fundamental problems in Cuba related to those associated with the provision of non-essential consumer goods and material incentives. The key issue was not that of resolving a food crisis by mobilizing agricultural resources and motivating rural producers, but to expand the production and supply of manufactured goods and the variety and quality of food products. Finally, the fact that the "crisis" was qualitatively different and not so acute, helps explain not only some of the differences in the content of the reforms and their restricted pro-peasant orientation, but also why several of the reforms - notably free trade and increased reliance on material incentives were abandoned or toned down once new contradictions arose. 6/

6. Such contradictions included sharply increased social and income differentiation, increased corruption and widespread pilfering from state enterprises, increased private capital accumulation in the "non-productive" sectors or speculative activities (including the housing market), and a series of negative effects on the development of the co-operative movement.

In 1986, the general economic situation deteriorated sharply following the fall in export revenues (related to the drop in the price of oil and the impact of Hurricane Kate on agro-export production) and the devaluation of the US dollar (which increased the cost of imports from Europe and Japan). As a result, the government was forced to introduce an austerity programme. Reforms which had the effect of "enriching the few" and which implied the increased availability of consumer goods were considered incompatible with this new economic environment.



Conclusion

What emerges from this paper is that the crisis which occurred in dependent transitional societies appears qualitatively different to that which prompted "adjustment" in other Third World countries or "reforms" in the more industrialized socialist countries.

In many African and Latin American countries, for example, crisis and adjustment have generally occurred in the context of "external shocks" and the so-called debt crisis. While the economies we have looked at are, for the most part, highly dependent on foreign markets and aid, the scale and nature of relations with other socialist countries have generally served to reduce, to some extent, vulnerability to external shocks. While countries like Viet Nam, Cuba and Nicaragua were highly indebted at the time when reforms were introduced, repayment of the debt did not generally constitute an overwhelming burden given the fairly flexible terms granted by the Eastern bloc countries and, in the case of Nicaragua, several Western European governments.

In several Eastern bloc countries, and to some extent, China, the crisis related more to a set of systemic constraints associated with centralized planning systems and the need to (a) achieve international industrial competitiveness, (b) develop alternative planning and management methods capable of dealing with the complex resource flows which characterize more developed economies, and (c) meet popular demands associated with **non essential** consumption - consumer durables, improved housing, better quality and variety of food, etc. (FitzGerald and Wuyts, 1988).

In countries like Mozambique, Viet Nam and Nicaragua the reform process was characterized by a very different rationale, related essentially to (a) a crisis of basic needs provisioning, that is, to problems of **essential** consumption where the food problem loomed particularly large; (b) the need to develop a survival economy capable of withstanding internal destabilization and external aggression; and (c) the need to deal with a variety of major economic distortions and disequilibria - in relative prices, the proliferation of black market activities, high levels of inflation, balance of trade deficits, etc.

In the case of the dependent transitional economies analysed in this paper, the crisis has been conceptualized in terms of the incapacity of the state to mobilize and appropriate surplus for basic needs provisioning and accumulation, as well as to direct the evolution of the economy. This latter aspect, in turn, relates to a crisis of orthodox models of planning and "hegemony", understood in the Gramscian sense of the capacity to exercise leadership on the basis of consensus and not coercion.

A number of important variations emerge in the nature of the reforms in the four countries reflecting, primarily, different levels of development of the productive forces, the nature or intensity of the

crisis, as well as variations in the balance of social forces. To some extent the Cuban problematic resembles more closely that of a number of the Eastern bloc countries.

The precise content of the policy changes was determined as much by the way in which political leaders and planners interpreted and analysed the crisis - reflecting to a large extent on the limitations of past policies and strategies - as on the nature of demands and pressures brought to bear by different social groups. Changes in social structure and at the level of civil society, as well as in institutionalized forms of participation, indicate that significant changes had occurred in the balance of social forces during the period leading up to the reforms. Such developments were crucial in determining the nature of the reforms.

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