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ABSTRACT

This paper looks at six theoretical approaches for understanding the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and examines the theories' implications for affirmative action. The theories are as follows: (1) motivational and attitudinal models; (2) sex-role socialization; (3) sex-typed jobs and internal labor markets; (4) the constraint of numbers; (5) patriarchy; and (6) minorities within a minority. The problem with these approaches is that they create tension. For instance, increasing the number of women in leadership positions, as two of the approaches imply, makes little sense from the perspective of motivational/attitudinal models. Conversely, to work upon the psychological structure of women makes no sense if the barriers exist at an organizational or institutional level. The basic problem with all the approaches is that they illuminate only part of the problem. Affirmative action must occur on all levels and become orchestrated in all areas. It is more fruitful, it is argued, to view the theoretical themes as representing different levels of analysis that focus upon different aspects of the same problem. So, for example, if affirmative action is viewed from an individual level, an organizational level, and an institutional level, then sex-role socialization can be grouped as an individual focus, thus making it consonant with other theories. (Contains 47 references.) (RJM)

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Women in Leadership and Implications for Affirmative Action

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Women are underrepresented in leadership positions. Brown (1979) estimates that about 6% of employed women worked in managerial/administrative positions in 1978 compared with 15% of employed men. Moreover, these women tended to fill lower-level managerial jobs. In the business/industrial complex, women represented almost 5% of middle management and barely 1% of top management. These numbers are duplicated in educational administration with women constituting 67% of public school teachers (Lyon and Saario, 1973), while only 1% of all women in elementary education and .4% of women in secondary education were principals in the mid 1970's (Hansot & Tyack, 1982).

Beginning in 1964 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act, a number of laws and court decisions mandating equal treatment of women and men in hiring and promotion have served as tools to encourage the selection of women for leadership positions. In particular, the courts have required organizations that are found guilty of previous discrimination against women to adopt affirmative action plans. Guidelines for these plans have been set forth by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Although the Reagan Administration has proposed to limit affirmative action plans to larger organizations, the federal government has required organizations contracting with the government to have affirmative action plans and to affirm that nondiscrimination is a policy. Other organizations have examined the composition of their work force by gender and have adopted voluntary affirmative action plans.

Affirmative action differs from equal opportunity or non-discrimination. Affirmative action is positive action taken to remove artificial, arbitrary, and unnecessary barriers to employment when the barriers operate invidiously to discriminate on the basis of racial or other impermissible classifications (Hall and Albrecht, 1979). What an affirmative action plan is depends upon the theory or theories of the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions that produced the plan. The theories are usually not stated explicitly but must be inferred from the activities called for in the plan.

This investigation considers six theoretical approaches to understanding the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions and their implications for affirmative action. These approaches are better described as themes than as coherent theories. No approach by itself is successful at explaining the differential representation of women and men in leadership. For this reason, it is

also necessary to consider the interrelationship of the approaches and whether actions implied by one approach may be contradictory to actions taken in response to another.

Motivational and Attitudinal Models

Many women in leadership positions tend to keep a low profile in an attempt to reduce anxiety produced by success in a male-dominated organization.

Motivational and attitudinal theories assume that issues related to women in leadership are at the individual level, either in the nature of the intrapersonal experiences of some women or in the prejudices of organizational members. Interventions based on these models focus upon the behaviors desired to be changed and do not focus to a great extent upon the origins of the behaviors. Women who become members of powerful, male-dominated groups, while building a record of perfect attendance, remain silent, diligent, and studious. The men do most of the talking and the maneuvering to shape the decisions (Perry, 1983).

Models of attributional sex differences (general externality, self-derogation, and low expectancy) predict that women are unlikely to attribute success to ability. Yet research in this area has failed to find strongly supported sex differences in attribution (Frieze, 1982). In competitive situations, in which achievement is assessed in comparative terms, this avoidance of success may serve to limit a woman's aspiration to a leadership role, especially when she supervises men. Brown and Klein (1982) reported women were allowed to advance only as long as they could be contained and put into the role of peacemaker and nurturer as well as supervisor.

Other researchers, instead of focusing on psychological characteristics of women, look at the attitudes of individuals toward the abilities of women. This is especially important in viewing the behavior of organizational members who hire and evaluate women (Becker, 1957). Studies clarifying the relationship between sex-role identity and competitive behavior have confirmed past research, indicating that high-achieving individuals are most frequently masculine, and have demonstrated the effects of sex-role identity on such variables as expectancies, self-evaluations, and attributions. These finding suggest that sex-role identity in work performance will predict cognition as well as behavior in competitive situations (Alagna, 1982).

Following an attitudinal or motivational model, the implications for affirmative action are, for the most part, targeted at the individual level. If women's attitudes and motivations are considered to by an underlying cause of their underrepresentation in leadership positions, then training programs designed to increase their motivation to manage would constitute one intervention alternative. Employers would strive to provide women with successful experiences and support to decrease their motivation to avoid success. If discriminatory attitudes among women's superiors are a problem, then one approach would be to make job descriptions and attendant qualifications more specific so that there would be less opportunity to discriminate. Sanctions would be applied to any manager discriminating.

Sex-Role Socialization

Unlike the attitudinal and motivational approach, the sex-role socialization thought focuses on the presumed source of different expectations, the existence of sex roles, and the socialization of men and women to fit the appropriate roles. Roles in general, and sex roles specifically, are rooted in social theory, particularly those notions of Blau (1976) related to social exchange.

Other women are not perceived as potential leaders in affirmative action plans because of sex-role stereotypes. The male stereotype is considered more appropriate for a leader. The stereotype considers men to be frank and straightforward in social relations, intellectually rational and competent, and bold and effective in dealing with the environment. Women, on the other hand, are seen as being interested in social amenities and emotional warmth, and concerned with matters that are basically affective and less material, and they are socialized accordingly. The literature in the last decade (Cannie, 1979; Fenn, 1978; Harragan, 1977; Henning & Jardim, 1977) has reinforced the idea that a woman must reduce the threat of her femininity if she is to be successful. Furthermore, the socialization to sex-roles stereotypes may affect how women perceive their career choices and the levels of education they attain. Historically, they have not aspired to leadership positions nor have they trained for them to the extent that men do. Men are traditionally perceived as being oriented toward a career while women are perceived as future wives and mothers. Families are assumed to be supportive of work roles for a man, but less supportive of those for a woman.

The assumption of sex roles and the concomitant socialization contributes to several myths that have grown with respect to working women. Women are perceived as being absent from work more often than men in similar jobs. Women's work is viewed as contributing toward the purchase of luxuries while a man's work provides necessities. No research seems to support these myths. Even generalizations that have been true to most working women in the past, such as the assumption that a woman will abandon her position when bearing a child, are not applicable to all women. The application of assumptions about a member of a class, based upon the observed characteristics of a class where the stereotype is assumed to be true, is called "statistical discrimination" and has been outlawed by the courts.

Sex-role stereotypes cause the same traits in men and women to be differentially perceived. What is seen as leadership qualities in a man are sometimes viewed as personality flaws in women. A woman is socialized to feel vulnerable and authoritarian for being assertive; ungiving and withholding for being realistic; unreasonable for expecting functional behavior and responsibility from staff (Bayes & Newton, 1978).

Leadership is not perceived as a legitimate role for women (Fennell, Barchas, Cohen, McMahon, & Hildebrand, 1978). Broadly, leader responsibilities can be viewed as consisting of two classes of problems for task groups (1) task content (solving the tasks) and (2) task procedure (deciding the procedure(s) a group will use in completing the task). In activities involving task content, authority is assigned on the basis of competency. In activities involving task procedure, more subjective evaluation of abilities and prejudice could more likely occur. Leadership largely involves those activities centered around task procedure. Generally, there has been less acceptance of task procedure directives and evaluations from women in leadership positions, and instances where the organization sometimes did not support her authority (Bayes & Newton,

1978; Kanter, 1977). Affirmative action plans need to address sex-role stereotypes as a potential barrier to women in leadership roles.

Sex-Typed Jobs and Internal Labor Markets

Analogous to institutional sex-role stereotypes are jobs that are sex-typed or predominantly male or female. Achieving professional status in such jobs is more difficult for women than men since a career is less often expected of women (Heins, Hendricks, & Martindale, 1982). In the recent past, one-third of all working women were concentrated in only seven jobs: secretary, retail sales clerk, household worker, elementary school teacher, waitress, and nurse (Bem & Bem, 1975). This concentration caused jobs to be sex-typed into those perceived as female jobs and male jobs. Of all the administrative jobs held by women, the elementary school principalship has offered some opportunity for autonomy and leadership. Yet, surveys indicate that the percentage of women in this capacity has dropped from roughly 55% in 1928 to 41% in 1938, to 38% in 1958 and to 22% in 1968 (Hansot & Tyack, 1982).

Women are often employed in jobs that are low in what Kanter (1977) terms opportunity and power. Opportunity is the chance to be promoted to a job with more official authority. Power is the ability to get things done, to mobilize resources, and to get and use whatever it is that a person needs for the goals she or he is attempting to meet. Kanter (1977) further suggests that a preference for male leaders is a preference for power in the context of an organization where women do not have access to power through activities and alliances.

Blau and Jusenius (1976) describe what they call an internal labor market of an organization. They argue that while entry-level positions are filled through a labor market external to an organization, there are many jobs that are filled through internal mobility. Over time, certain career ladders are established by rules or tradition whereby a limited number of routes to higher-level jobs are viewed as legitimate. One's entry-level job and subsequent promotions can place limitations on a person's opportunity for advancement in the organization. Some jobs are "dead-ends" from which one cannot advance. Traditionally, the jobs that are sex typed for women tend to by those that are not on career ladders leading to high managerial jobs. Furthermore, even within "feminine" occupations, the persons selected into the leadership positions tend to be men. Thus, internal labor markets assist in keeping jobs sex typed that are beyond the entry-level positions.

The implications for affirmative action from the above orientation include a labor-force analysis by sex so that the extent of occupational segregation can be assessed. A labor-force analysis is done by recording the relevant characteristics, usually race and sex, of a person in every job, and then aggregating the results by job title, department, and whatever other classifications are relevant. Classifications that have proportions in an imbalance with the proportions of the pool of qualified people are suspect in terms of discrimination.

An analysis should include an assessment of skill needs and monitor the flow of people—including hiring, promotion, and exit—to identify problems in retention as well as in promotion. Special efforts should be made to provide access to positions from which all persons can gain the experience to be promoted to the positions on the traditional career ladder. Present career

ladders must be clearly identified and new ones created. Women should be actively recruited for all positions, especially the ones in which they are currently underrepresented. Internal job searches must be increased to identify and reward qualified women who are already employed.

The Constraint of Numbers

The constraint of numbers approach focuses on the results of small proportions of women in male sex-typed occupations and in positions on career ladders leading to higher-level leadership positions. The pressures that women face when they break into male sex-typed occupations range from handicaps such as the inability to obtain information through the "good ole boy" network (Harragan, 1977) to that of having to perform household management.

Kanter (1977) suggests that when women are so few as to comprise less than 15% of a group, three dynamics become observable. First, women receive more attention leading to more performance pressure. In addition, one woman is often viewed as being representative of all women, stereotyping how well women perform in general. In this view, women are explicitly under pressure to excel, but implicitly under pressure not to perform so well as to make their male colleagues appear less than favorable.

The second dynamic is polarization and exaggeration of differences between the male and female culture, which leads to a heightening of the cultural boundaries. Such aspects of male culture as locker-room language, sexist jokes, and the discussion of athletics, may differentiate the women from the male culture that surrounds them. Through frequent references to her presence, she is reminded that she is an outsider. She is under pressure to view herself as an exception, but at the same time, she is expected to refrain from exploiting her token position through either pressing for preferential treatment or criticizing her treatment as a professional woman. In view of this situation, there is a need for more research regarding the contextual understanding of gender (Thorne, 1981).

Third, the token woman is fitted into certain roles. Because she can be the sole woman or one of a few women in her peer group, it is the token woman to whom everyone looks for the woman's point of view, and evidence of how women handle the position and accomplish tasks relying on interpersonal relations. She is directed into special roles for women in affirmative action or personnel. She is frequently mistaken for a secretary of a wife. She is seen as a model for all women to follow. But her individual abilities, opinions, and qualities that diverge from the female stereotype are not easily noticed or accepted.

Kanter traces all of these dynamics back to the fundamental problem of small numbers of women in leadership positions. She recommends that enough women be hired so that they can form coalitions among themselves, have potential allies, and affect the culture of the entire work group. She notes that the token situation is a self-perpetuating one. In terms of affirmative action, Kanter (1977) suggests that most arguments made in favor of numerical guidelines in hiring and job placement limit their own effectiveness by making only part of the case. There is also a strong case that can be made for number balancing a worthwhile goal in itself, because, inside the organization, relative numbers can play a large part in further outcomes from work effectiveness and promotion prospects to psychological distress (Kanter, 1977).

The militancy of feminists in the early nineteenth century resulted in the increase of numbers of female educational administrators, particularly in county and state superintendencies. In terms of affirmative action, the numbers approach emphasizes the need to meet or exceed goals for hiring women. If enough women are not available to form a minority as opposed to a token, steps can be taken in socializing new employees to encourage opportunities to form protégé/mentor relationships, to be included in the peer group, and to form networks with people in similar positions. The male peers can be sensitized to the present norms of social interaction including forms of gender discrimination. Specific research efforts need to be directed to observe the nature of performance of women in leadership positions related to the constraint of numbers.

Patriarchy

Theories of patriarchy are observable in institutional settings. Hartmann (1979) refers to patriarchy as the social relations that have a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations and solidarity among men, which enable them to control women. While the analysis by sex-role socialization also recognizes separate spheres for men and women, the focus there is on individuals. The focus in patriarchy is on institutions that are controlled predominantly by males. While women usually have more influence in the family sphere, the patriarchal approach assumes the superior authority accorded to the male even in the home and the way it was and is institutionalized in law and customs.

The underrepresentation of women in positions of power and influence is seen as tied directly to the division of labor between the sexes, where the woman is seen as fundamentally responsible for the home. Men are fundamentally viewed as responsible for representing the home to the external world and managing exchanges with other formal organizations. The structure of work, in which men for the most part control the labor and opportunities of women, parallels the family structure where men are also seen as the ultimate authority figures (see Epstein, 1971). Men usually resisted the employment of women outside the home during early industrialization. Unions also resisted training women for skilled jobs (Hartmann, 1979).

Gender differences in organizational structures and processes operate through: (1) differential recruitment of women into jobs requiring dependence and passivity, paralleling social norms for women; (2) selective recruitment of particularly compliant women into these jobs and elimination of assertive women, and (3) control mechanisms used in organizations for women, which reinforce control mechanisms to which they are subjected in other areas of society (see Acker & Van Hooten, 1974). These control mechanisms include close supervision and control at an individual rather than group level, with less systematic application of rules and more reliance on the social relationship between employee and supervisor. This discourages the formation of coalition—one source of power for the relatively powerless. Since control by a single authority, particularly male, parallels patriarchal control, the effect of such control is multiplied.

The gender-based division of labor is reinforced and reproduced at several levels where patriarchy works through discrimination (Feagin & Feagin, 1978):

(1) Interest theory of discrimination: Men are motivated by the desire to protect their own privilege and

power. Therefore, they protect their own domain of authority and the group's position (see Hartmann, (1979).

(2) Internal colonialism: The sexual division of labor has become institutionalized and is seen as the norm.

(3) Institutional sexism: Unintentional sexism occurs through policies that favor one sex over another.

Patriarchy is beginning to break down in our society. Women can vote, and married women can now own property and obtain credit in their own names. However, where it is assumed, often implicitly, that a male who is married and working is the norm, then covert policies still exist. Most managerial policy still assumes that the manager does not need to show concern about family responsibilities of employees beyond financial support (Zellman, 1976). There are nevertheless some occupations, such as school superintendent and corporate executive, that are almost two-person careers since the wife manages the social and public relations aspects of the job (Kanter, 1977).

While she does not discuss work and family in terms of patriarchy, Kanter (1977) suggests the examination of the relationship between work and family to identify situations in which each is vulnerable to problems from the other and coping mechanisms that work. Recent research (Pryor & Reeves, 1982) examining the relationship between work, opportunity structure, gender, and life satisfaction, confirmed the hypothesis that family satisfaction is more important to females than males.

This research is emphasized even further by Gribstov (undated) who observed that the increase and subsequent decline in the proportion of female school administrators from the late nineteenth to early twentieth century is coincidental with the rise and fall of the nineteenth-century feminist movement and the strong network of women's organizations that evolved at the same time. It should be noted that not all organizations of women were feminist, but they were run by women and were linked in a national organization—the General Federation of Women's Clubs. Gribstov speculates that the revival of a general coalition of women could help women move into administrative positions in education. Professional organizations within education have accentuated their attacks on sexism. In research that considers career paths and special problems of women superintendents, it was shown that career paths are not discriminated by personal characteristics, professional characteristics, special problems encountered, or advice offered. Career paths were most influenced by education, particularly the highest degree earned (McDade & Drake, 1982).

Implications for affirmative action include the basic prescription implied by a patriarchal analysis to either break down the male structure of authority or to introduce women into it on an equal basis with men. Separate institutions may be necessary to support women as they move into roles formerly dominated by men. Having been placed outside the educational realm, women are invisible within it; the contemporary paradigm of patriarchal philosophy of education needs to reflect the contributions of women (Martin, 1982). Female managed and owned businesses, organizations of women, and networks of peer women can provide a unifying focus for women and peer/organizational support. Work rules and the hierarchical structure of authority should be reevaluated. There should be more opportunities for both sexes to assume the parental role, such as part-time work, paternity as well as maternity leave, and child care. Two-person jobs either should restructured or couples should be hired jointly. If status and rewards were not so tightly structured into higher-level jobs, perhaps more people would feel

free to exhibit leadership, and men would more readily share the jobs that they presently dominate.

Minorities within a Minority

In assessing the impact on minorities from the five themes presented, the constraint of numbers and its repercussions in organizations becomes magnified. The dynamics that characterize the introduction of a female into a male power base are magnified when the female is of an ethnic minority. The stereotyping, polarization, and tokenism are dynamics that minority women have encountered before and continue to encounter in leadership positions.

Lewin (1958) focused some attention on the tendency for ethnic leaders to be marginal to their own groups and, therefore, unreliable as strategists and spokespersons. As black women became significant in their fields, for example, only a few have been considered as leaders in any generally recognized sense. Being lauded or respected apparently did not imply a willingness to make assumptions about readiness for consideration for placement in leadership roles (Higham, 1978). More recently, research by Millham & Smith (1981) concluded that Blacks are generally less concerned with traditional sex-role differentiation as defined by the white majority. Seemingly, this would permit black females to have greater flexibility in accepting or rejecting behavioral sex roles, but it may be an additional source of stress for black women. Macke, Hudis, and Larrick (1978) concluded that the employment opportunities for black married women has little effect on their subsequent attitudes regarding nontraditional sex-role ideologies, while for white wives the opportunities markedly affected their attitudes and behaviors.

Stereotypically, a cultural minority is less accepting of a leader within its own culture. The difficulty is the conception that some Blacks characterize as "you're no better than I" (Jarmon, 1980). While there are criticisms of affirmative-action programs for black females, some research asserts that it actually has provided access to many jobs for black women, particularly in higher education (Mosley, 1980).

The pattern of discrimination against minority women in various industries and occupations can be explained by the size of the labor force in each. In areas of large concentrations of Mexican women, for instance, it has been noted that they encounter more discrimination, possibly because they are seen as a threat to the dominant group. Mexican women, particularly in Texas, working in public administration or government positions often enjoy higher wages and less discrimination as a result of enforced governmental response to affirmative action (Mindiola, 1980). While there is a perceived pressure for the Chicana in the work force to assimilate the roles of both cultures, it is worthwhile to note that this assimilation will cause both cultures to change (Jaramillo, 1980).

American Indian women in leadership roles are as diverse as their tribal affiliations. Some have been raised within the realm of matriarchal family ties. Overall their responses to the conflicts they deal with in leadership roles indicate that compromises are the most difficult aspect of the assimilation process. Many view their contribution to affirmative action as that of a role model (Thomas, 1981). Among minority women, Indian women are the least identified with affirmative-action programs. This may best be explained by noting that the majority of their

battles are far more identified with basic need fulfillment (Jamieson, 1979). Although the 1980 census report indicates that there are over 700,000 Indian women in this nation, they remain virtually invisible in leadership roles in the dominant society.

While research and essays by Indian women pose questions that touch the foundations of affirmative action, the answers to there questions, such as how to react to the double bind of Indianness and femaleness, lie in further research (Medicine, 1980; Metoyer-Duran, 1979). Answers that point to new styles of leadership for Indian female administrators are currently being studied and reported (Green, 1980; U.S. Department of Labor/Women's Bureau, 1979). Miller (1978) analyzes leadership roles filled by modern Indian women, and Kidwell (1979) studied the difficulties of overcoming nonIndian political agendas as an Indian female professional. So while the scope of work completed in this area is marginal compared to other minorities, the implications for affirmative-action programs are broad.

Affirmative-action programs for women have typically focused on cultural minorities. While the total number of Blacks, Chicanos, and Indians available to the work force can be increased, increasing the number of minority females trained for and available to leadership roles is a more complex issue. For those women whose heritage is seen as advantageous to an employer, assuming leadership roles may be more complicated for them than for their Anglo counterparts. The minority female often views success as attainable only be exchanging or compromising her culture heritage for recognition and success or the attitudes that encourage that success. She may view this exchange or compromise as an assimilation that provides her with a chance to help her people. Realistically, the woman who crosses cultures risks becoming a cultural "half-breed."

The development of minority women into leadership roles cannot be analyzed without due consideration of their ethnic identities and their perceived responsibility to maintain their cultural heritages. Central to this consideration is the extent to which assimilation is a valued goal by the minority. Another primary consideration is the caution that the available pool of minority women cannot and must not be stereotyped by their ethnicities or their gender.

Conclusions

If the six theoretical themes presented are viewed as competing, then what they imply for affirmative action is sometimes contradictory. For instance, increasing the number of women in leadership positions, as two of the approaches imply, makes little sense from the motivational/attitudinal models approach without first changing the motivations of women or the attitudes of their employers. Conversely, to work upon the psychological structure of women makes no sense if the barriers exist at an organizational or institutional level.

It is more fruitful to view the above theoretical themes as representing different levels of analysis the focus upon different aspects of the same problem as represented below:

(1) Individual level:	--Motivational and Attitudinal Models
	--Sex Role Socialization
(2) Organizational level:	--Sex-Typed Jobs and Internal Labor Markets
	--Constraint of Numbers
(3) Institutional level:	--Sex-Typed Jobs and Internal Labor Markets

--Patriarchy
--Sex-Role Socialization
--Minorities Within a Minority

The apparent contradictions arise from the theories working at different levels. If they are viewed as focusing on different levels of the problem, like layers of an onion, their relation to each other is more profitably understood.

The basic problem with all of the approaches presented is that they illuminate only part of the problem. To make progress, affirmative action must occur on all levels and become orchestrated into all areas addressed by the various theoretical themes. The question of how to do this is a difficult one, especially when intervention on the patriarchal level is included. It is theoretically possible to work on all levels at once, however, combining the structural changes in both organizations and institutions with training programs focused at the individual level may be overly time-consuming and burdensome. A patriarchal analysis requires more changes than most persons are currently willing to accept, but if this level is ignored, problems for women will remain.

Current ideas of affirmative action that have been mandated by the courts include the provision of equal opportunity in hiring and promotion, and reporting on work-force analyses and hiring goals set forth in a plan along with strategies for achievement. The courts have recognized some forms of organizational discrimination through policies such as testing, and they have put the burden of proof on the employer to demonstrate the validity of such tests. These mandates seem to be an effort to force organizations to adopt procedures assuring that members will not discriminate and to hold organizations accountable for the results—a combination of an organizational and individual approach. The courts have not intervened at the institutional level, but seem to believe that this is a policy matter for the legislative branch to address.

To achieve the movement of more women into leadership positions, an orchestrated affirmative-action approach incorporating all theoretical themes and implications needs to be considered. The basic unanswered questions are: (1) How much change will organizational members, governing boards and clientele tolerate? (2) Is society ready to have women assume leadership positions that men now dominate? (3) What social changes will be necessitated? None of the six themes discussed comprehensively address these questions; therefore, continued research and dialogue are in order.

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