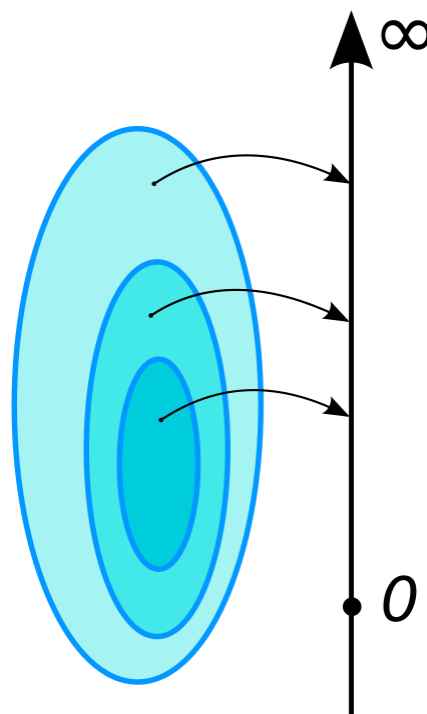


Measure (mathematics)

In [mathematics](#), the concept of a **measure** is a generalization and formalization of [geometrical measures](#) ([length](#), [area](#), [volume](#)) and other common notions, such as [magnitude](#), [mass](#), and [probability](#) of events. These seemingly distinct concepts have many similarities and can often be treated together in a single mathematical context. Measures are foundational in [probability theory](#), [integration theory](#), and can be generalized to assume [negative values](#), as with [electrical charge](#). Far-reaching generalizations (such as [spectral measures](#) and [projection-valued measures](#)) of measure are widely used in [quantum physics](#) and physics in general.



Informally, a measure has the property of being [monotone](#) in the sense that if ***A*** is a [subset](#) of ***B***, the measure of ***A*** is less than or equal to the measure of ***B***. Furthermore, the measure of the [empty set](#) is required to be 0. A simple example is a volume (how big an object occupies a space) as a measure.

The intuition behind this concept dates back to [ancient Greece](#), when [Archimedes](#) tried to calculate the [area of a circle](#).^{[1][2]} But it was not until the late 19th and early 20th centuries that measure theory became a branch of mathematics. The foundations of modern measure theory were laid in the works of [Émile Borel](#), [Henri Lebesgue](#), [Nikolai Luzin](#), [Johann Radon](#), [Constantin Carathéodory](#), and [Maurice Fréchet](#), among others.

Definition

$$\mu(\text{[diagram of a large rectangle divided into four smaller rectangles]}) = \mu(\text{[diagram of the top-left rectangle]}) + \mu(\text{[diagram of the top-right rectangle]}) + \mu(\text{[diagram of the bottom-left rectangle]}) + \mu(\text{[diagram of the bottom-right rectangle]}) + \dots$$

Countable additivity of a measure μ : The measure of a countable disjoint union is the same as the sum of all measures of each subset.

Let X be a set and Σ a σ -algebra over X . A set function μ from Σ to the extended real number line is called a **measure** if the following conditions hold:

- **Non-negativity**: For all $E \in \Sigma$, $\mu(E) \geq 0$.
- $\mu(\emptyset) = 0$.
- **Countable additivity** (or σ -additivity): For all countable collections $\{E_k\}_{k=1}^{\infty}$ of pairwise disjoint sets in Σ ,

$$\mu\left(\bigcup_{k=1}^{\infty} E_k\right) = \sum_{k=1}^{\infty} \mu(E_k).$$

If at least one set E has finite measure, then the requirement $\mu(\emptyset) = 0$ is met automatically due to countable additivity:

$$\mu(E) = \mu(E \cup \emptyset) = \mu(E) + \mu(\emptyset),$$

and therefore $\mu(\emptyset) = 0$.

If the condition of non-negativity is dropped, and μ takes on at most one of the values of $\pm\infty$, then μ is called a **signed measure**.

The pair (X, Σ) is called a **measurable space**, and the members of Σ are called **measurable sets**.

A triple (X, Σ, μ) is called a **measure space**. A **probability measure** is a measure with total measure one – that is, $\mu(X) = 1$. A **probability space** is a measure space with a probability measure.

For measure spaces that are also **topological spaces** various compatibility conditions can be placed for the measure and the topology. Most measures met in practice in **analysis** (and in many cases also in **probability theory**) are **Radon measures**. Radon measures have an alternative definition in terms of linear functionals on the **locally convex topological vector space** of **continuous functions** with **compact support**. This approach is taken by **Bourbaki** (2004) and a number of other sources. For more details, see the article on **Radon measures**.

Instances

Some important measures are listed here.

- The [counting measure](#) is defined by $\mu(S) = \text{number of elements in } S$.
- The [Lebesgue measure](#) on \mathbb{R} is a [complete translation-invariant](#) measure on a σ -algebra containing the [intervals](#) in \mathbb{R} such that $\mu([0, 1]) = 1$; and every other measure with these properties extends the Lebesgue measure.
- Circular [angle](#) measure is invariant under [rotation](#), and [hyperbolic angle](#) measure is invariant under [squeeze mapping](#).
- The [Haar measure](#) for a [locally compact topological group](#) is a generalization of the Lebesgue measure (and also of counting measure and circular angle measure) and has similar uniqueness properties.
- The [Hausdorff measure](#) is a generalization of the Lebesgue measure to sets with non-integer dimension, in particular, fractal sets.
- Every [probability space](#) gives rise to a measure which takes the value 1 on the whole space (and therefore takes all its values in the [unit interval](#) $[0, 1]$). Such a measure is called a *probability measure* or *distribution*. See the [list of probability distributions](#) for instances.
- The [Dirac measure](#) δ_a (cf. [Dirac delta function](#)) is given by $\delta_a(S) = \chi_S(a)$, where χ_S is the [indicator function](#) of S . The measure of a set is 1 if it contains the point a and 0 otherwise.

Other 'named' measures used in various theories include: [Borel measure](#), [Jordan measure](#), [ergodic measure](#), [Gaussian measure](#), [Baire measure](#), [Radon measure](#), [Young measure](#), and [Loeb measure](#).

In physics an example of a measure is spatial distribution of [mass](#) (see for example, [gravity potential](#)), or another non-negative [extensive property](#), [conserved](#) (see [conservation law](#) for a list of these) or not. Negative values lead to signed measures, see "generalizations" below.

- [Liouville measure](#), known also as the natural volume form on a symplectic manifold, is useful in classical statistical and Hamiltonian mechanics.
- [Gibbs measure](#) is widely used in statistical mechanics, often under the name [canonical ensemble](#).

Measure theory is used in machine learning. One example is the Flow Induced Probability Measure in GFlowNet.^[3]

Basic properties

Let μ be a measure.

Monotonicity

If E_1 and E_2 are measurable sets with $E_1 \subseteq E_2$ then
$$\mu(E_1) \leq \mu(E_2).$$

Measure of countable unions and intersections

Countable subadditivity

For any [countable sequence](#) E_1, E_2, E_3, \dots of (not necessarily disjoint) measurable sets E_n in Σ :

$$\mu \left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} E_i \right) \leq \sum_{i=1}^{\infty} \mu(E_i).$$

Continuity from below

If E_1, E_2, E_3, \dots are measurable sets that are increasing (meaning that $E_1 \subseteq E_2 \subseteq E_3 \subseteq \dots$) then the [union](#) of the sets E_n is measurable and

$$\mu \left(\bigcup_{i=1}^{\infty} E_i \right) = \lim_{i \rightarrow \infty} \mu(E_i) = \sup_{i \geq 1} \mu(E_i).$$

Continuity from above

If E_1, E_2, E_3, \dots are measurable sets that are decreasing (meaning that $E_1 \supseteq E_2 \supseteq E_3 \supseteq \dots$) then the [intersection](#) of the sets E_n is measurable; furthermore, if at least one of the E_n has finite measure then

$$\mu \left(\bigcap_{i=1}^{\infty} E_i \right) = \lim_{i \rightarrow \infty} \mu(E_i) = \inf_{i \geq 1} \mu(E_i).$$

This property is false without the assumption that at least one of the E_n has finite measure. For instance, for each $n \in \mathbb{N}$, let $E_n = [n, \infty) \subseteq \mathbb{R}$, which all have infinite Lebesgue measure, but the intersection is empty.

Other properties

Completeness

A measurable set X is called a *null set* if $\mu(X) = 0$. A subset of a null set is called a *negligible set*. A negligible set need not be measurable, but every measurable negligible set is automatically a null set. A measure is called *complete* if every negligible set is measurable.

A measure can be extended to a complete one by considering the σ -algebra of subsets Y which differ by a negligible set from a measurable set X , that is, such that the *symmetric difference* of X and Y is contained in a null set. One defines $\mu(Y)$ to equal $\mu(X)$.

"Dropping the Edge"

If $f : X \rightarrow [0, +\infty]$ is $(\Sigma, \mathcal{B}([0, +\infty]))$ -measurable, then

$$\mu\{x \in X : f(x) \geq t\} = \mu\{x \in X : f(x) > t\}$$

for *almost all* $t \in [-\infty, \infty]$.^[4] This property is used in connection with *Lebesgue integral*.

Proof

Both $F(t) := \mu\{x \in X : f(x) > t\}$ and $G(t) := \mu\{x \in X : f(x) \geq t\}$ are monotonically non-increasing functions of t , so both of them have *at most countably many discontinuities* and thus they are continuous almost everywhere, relative to the Lebesgue measure. If $t < 0$ then $\{x \in X : f(x) \geq t\} = X = \{x \in X : f(x) > t\}$, so that $F(t) = G(t)$, as desired.

If t is such that $\mu\{x \in X : f(x) > t\} = +\infty$ then *monotonicity* implies

$$\mu\{x \in X : f(x) \geq t\} = +\infty,$$

so that $F(t) = G(t)$, as required. If $\mu\{x \in X : f(x) > t\} = +\infty$ for all t then we are done, so assume otherwise. Then there is a unique

$t_0 \in \{-\infty\} \cup [0, +\infty)$ such that F is infinite to the left of t (which can only happen when $t_0 \geq 0$) and finite to the right. Arguing as above,

$\mu\{x \in X : f(x) \geq t\} = +\infty$ when $t < t_0$. Similarly, if $t_0 \geq 0$ and $F(t_0) = +\infty$ then $F(t_0) = G(t_0)$.

For $t > t_0$, let t_n be a monotonically non-decreasing sequence converging to t .

The monotonically non-increasing sequences $\{x \in X : f(x) > t_n\}$ of members

of Σ has at least one finitely μ -measurable component, and

$$\{x \in X : f(x) \geq t\} = \bigcap_n \{x \in X : f(x) > t_n\}.$$

Continuity from above guarantees that

$$\mu\{x \in X : f(x) \geq t\} = \lim_{t_n \uparrow t} \mu\{x \in X : f(x) > t_n\}.$$

The right-hand side $\lim_{t_n \uparrow t} F(t_n)$ then equals $F(t) = \mu\{x \in X : f(x) > t\}$ if t is a point of continuity of F . Since F is continuous almost everywhere, this completes the proof.

Additivity

Measures are required to be countably additive. However, the condition can be strengthened as follows. For any set I and any set of nonnegative $r_i, i \in I$ define:

$$\sum_{i \in I} r_i = \sup \left\{ \sum_{i \in J} r_i : |J| < \infty, J \subseteq I \right\}.$$

That is, we define the sum of the r_i to be the supremum of all the sums of finitely many of them.

A measure μ on Σ is κ -additive if for any $\lambda < \kappa$ and any family of disjoint sets $X_\alpha, \alpha < \lambda$ the following hold:

$$\begin{aligned} \bigcup_{\alpha \in \lambda} X_\alpha &\in \Sigma \\ \mu \left(\bigcup_{\alpha \in \lambda} X_\alpha \right) &= \sum_{\alpha \in \lambda} \mu(X_\alpha). \end{aligned}$$

The second condition is equivalent to the statement that the [ideal](#) of null sets is κ -complete.

Sigma-finite measures

A measure space (X, Σ, μ) is called finite if $\mu(X)$ is a finite real number (rather than ∞).

Nonzero finite measures are analogous to [probability measures](#) in the sense that any finite

measure μ is proportional to the probability measure $\frac{1}{\mu(X)} \mu$. A measure μ is called σ -finite if

X can be decomposed into a countable union of measurable sets of finite measure.

Analogously, a set in a measure space is said to have a σ -finite measure if it is a countable union of sets with finite measure.

For example, the [real numbers](#) with the standard [Lebesgue measure](#) are σ -finite but not finite.

Consider the [closed intervals](#) $[k, k+1]$ for all [integers](#) k ; there are countably many such

intervals, each has measure 1, and their union is the entire real line. Alternatively, consider the

real numbers with the **counting measure**, which assigns to each finite set of reals the number of points in the set. This measure space is not σ -finite, because every set with finite measure contains only finitely many points, and it would take uncountably many such sets to cover the entire real line. The σ -finite measure spaces have some very convenient properties; σ -finiteness can be compared in this respect to the **Lindelöf property** of topological spaces. They can be also thought of as a vague generalization of the idea that a measure space may have 'uncountable measure'.

Strictly localizable measures

Semifinite measures

Let X be a set, let \mathcal{A} be a sigma-algebra on X , and let μ be a measure on \mathcal{A} . We say μ is **semifinite** to mean that for all $A \in \mu^{\text{pre}}\{+\infty\}$, $\mathcal{P}(A) \cap \mu^{\text{pre}}(\mathbb{R}_{>0}) \neq \emptyset$.^[5]

Semifinite measures generalize sigma-finite measures, in such a way that some big theorems of measure theory that hold for sigma-finite but not arbitrary measures can be extended with little modification to hold for semifinite measures. (To-do: add examples of such theorems; cf. the talk page.)

Basic examples

- Every sigma-finite measure is semifinite.
- Assume $\mathcal{A} = \mathcal{P}(X)$, let $f : X \rightarrow [0, +\infty]$, and assume $\mu(A) = \sum_{a \in A} f(a)$ for all $A \subseteq X$.
 - We have that μ is sigma-finite if and only if $f(x) < +\infty$ for all $x \in X$ and $f^{\text{pre}}(\mathbb{R}_{>0})$ is countable. We have that μ is semifinite if and only if $f(x) < +\infty$ for all $x \in X$.^[6]
 - Taking $f = X \times \{1\}$ above (so that μ is counting measure on $\mathcal{P}(X)$), we see that counting measure on $\mathcal{P}(X)$ is
 - sigma-finite if and only if X is countable; and
 - semifinite (without regard to whether X is countable). (Thus, counting measure, on the power set $\mathcal{P}(X)$ of an arbitrary uncountable set X , gives an example of a semifinite measure that is not sigma-finite.)
- Let d be a complete, separable metric on X , let \mathcal{B} be the Borel sigma-algebra induced by d , and let $s \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$. Then the **Hausdorff measure** $\mathcal{H}^s|_{\mathcal{B}}$ is semifinite.^[7]
- Let d be a complete, separable metric on X , let \mathcal{B} be the Borel sigma-algebra induced by d , and let $s \in \mathbb{R}_{>0}$. Then the **packing measure** $\mathcal{H}^s|_{\mathcal{B}}$ is semifinite.^[8]

Involved example

The zero measure is sigma-finite and thus semifinite. In addition, the zero measure is clearly less than or equal to μ . It can be shown there is a greatest measure with these two properties:

Theorem (semifinite part)^[9] – For any measure μ on \mathcal{A} , there exists, among semifinite measures on \mathcal{A} that are less than or equal to μ , a **greatest** element μ_{sf} .

We say the **semifinite part** of μ to mean the semifinite measure μ_{sf} defined in the above theorem. We give some nice, explicit formulas, which some authors may take as definition, for the semifinite part:

- $\mu_{\text{sf}} = (\sup\{\mu(B) : B \in \mathcal{P}(A) \cap \mu^{\text{pre}}(\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0})\})_{A \in \mathcal{A}}$.^[9]
- $\mu_{\text{sf}} = (\sup\{\mu(A \cap B) : B \in \mu^{\text{pre}}(\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0})\})_{A \in \mathcal{A}}$.^[10]
- $\mu_{\text{sf}} = \mu|_{\mu^{\text{pre}}(\mathbb{R}_{>0})} \cup \{A \in \mathcal{A} : \sup\{\mu(B) : B \in \mathcal{P}(A)\} = +\infty\} \times \{+\infty\} \cup \{A \in \mathcal{A} : \sup\{\mu(B) : B \in \mathcal{P}(A)\} < +\infty\} \times \{0\}$.^[11]

Since μ_{sf} is semifinite, it follows that if $\mu = \mu_{\text{sf}}$ then μ is semifinite. It is also evident that if μ is semifinite then $\mu = \mu_{\text{sf}}$.

Non-examples

Every $0 - \infty$ *measure* that is not the zero measure is not semifinite. (Here, we say $0 - \infty$ *measure* to mean a measure whose range lies in $\{0, +\infty\}$: $(\forall A \in \mathcal{A})(\mu(A) \in \{0, +\infty\})$.) Below we give examples of $0 - \infty$ measures that are not zero measures.

- Let X be nonempty, let \mathcal{A} be a σ -algebra on X , let $f : X \rightarrow \{0, +\infty\}$ be not the zero function, and let $\mu = (\sum_{x \in A} f(x))_{A \in \mathcal{A}}$. It can be shown that μ is a measure.
 - $\mu = \{(\emptyset, 0)\} \cup (\mathcal{A} \setminus \{\emptyset\}) \times \{+\infty\}$.^[12]
 - $X = \{0\}, \mathcal{A} = \{\emptyset, X\}, \mu = \{(\emptyset, 0), (X, +\infty)\}$.^[13]
- Let X be uncountable, let \mathcal{A} be a σ -algebra on X , let $\mathcal{C} = \{A \in \mathcal{A} : A \text{ is countable}\}$ be the countable elements of \mathcal{A} , and let $\mu = \mathcal{C} \times \{0\} \cup (\mathcal{A} \setminus \mathcal{C}) \times \{+\infty\}$. It can be shown that μ is a measure.^[5]

Involved non-example

Measures that are not semifinite are very wild when restricted to certain sets.^[Note 1] Every measure is, in a sense, semifinite once its $0 - \infty$ part (the wild part) is taken away.

Theorem (Luther decomposition)^{[14][15]} — For any measure μ on \mathcal{A} , there exists a $0 - \infty$ measure ξ on \mathcal{A} such that $\mu = \nu + \xi$ for some semifinite measure ν on \mathcal{A} . In fact, among such measures ξ , there exists a **least** measure $\mu_{0-\infty}$. Also, we have $\mu = \mu_{\text{sf}} + \mu_{0-\infty}$.

We say the $0 - \infty$ part of μ to mean the measure $\mu_{0-\infty}$ defined in the above theorem. Here is an explicit formula for $\mu_{0-\infty}$:

$$\mu_{0-\infty} = (\sup\{\mu(B) - \mu_{\text{sf}}(B) : B \in \mathcal{P}(A) \cap \mu_{\text{sf}}^{\text{pre}}(\mathbb{R}_{\geq 0})\})_{A \in \mathcal{A}}.$$

Results regarding semifinite measures

- Let \mathbb{F} be \mathbb{R} or \mathbb{C} , and let $T : L_{\mathbb{F}}^{\infty}(\mu) \rightarrow (L_{\mathbb{F}}^1(\mu))^* : g \mapsto T_g = \left(\int f g d\mu \right)_{f \in L_{\mathbb{F}}^1(\mu)}$. Then μ is semifinite if and only if T is injective.^{[16][17]} (This result has import in the study of the **dual space of $L^1 = L_{\mathbb{F}}^1(\mu)$** .)
- Let \mathbb{F} be \mathbb{R} or \mathbb{C} , and let \mathcal{T} be the topology of convergence in measure on $L_{\mathbb{F}}^0(\mu)$. Then μ is semifinite if and only if \mathcal{T} is Hausdorff.^{[18][19]}
- (Johnson) Let X be a set, let \mathcal{A} be a sigma-algebra on X , let μ be a measure on \mathcal{A} , let Y be a set, let \mathcal{B} be a sigma-algebra on Y , and let ν be a measure on \mathcal{B} . If μ, ν are both not a $0 - \infty$ measure, then both μ and ν are semifinite if and only if $(\mu \times_{\text{cld}} \nu)(A \times B) = \mu(A)\nu(B)$ for all $A \in \mathcal{A}$ and $B \in \mathcal{B}$. (Here, $\mu \times_{\text{cld}} \nu$ is the measure defined in Theorem 39.1 in Berberian '65.^[20])

Localizable measures

Localizable measures are a special case of semifinite measures and a generalization of sigma-finite measures.

Let X be a set, let \mathcal{A} be a sigma-algebra on X , and let μ be a measure on \mathcal{A} .

- Let \mathbb{F} be \mathbb{R} or \mathbb{C} , and let $T : L_{\mathbb{F}}^{\infty}(\mu) \rightarrow (L_{\mathbb{F}}^1(\mu))^* : g \mapsto T_g = \left(\int f g d\mu \right)_{f \in L_{\mathbb{F}}^1(\mu)}$. Then μ is localizable if and only if T is bijective (if and only if $L_{\mathbb{F}}^{\infty}(\mu)$ "is" $L_{\mathbb{F}}^1(\mu)^*$).^{[21][17]}

s-finite measures

A measure is said to be s-finite if it is a countable sum of finite measures. S-finite measures are more general than sigma-finite ones and have applications in the theory of **stochastic processes**.

Non-measurable sets

If the [axiom of choice](#) is assumed to be true, it can be proved that not all subsets of [Euclidean space](#) are [Lebesgue measurable](#); examples of such sets include the [Vitali set](#), and the non-measurable sets postulated by the [Hausdorff paradox](#) and the [Banach–Tarski paradox](#).

Generalizations

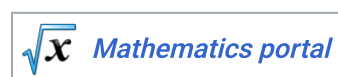
For certain purposes, it is useful to have a "measure" whose values are not restricted to the non-negative reals or infinity. For instance, a countably additive [set function](#) with values in the (signed) real numbers is called a [signed measure](#), while such a function with values in the [complex numbers](#) is called a [complex measure](#). Observe, however, that complex measure is necessarily of finite variation, hence complex measures include [finite signed measures](#) but not, for example, the [Lebesgue measure](#).

Measures that take values in [Banach spaces](#) have been studied extensively.^[22] A measure that takes values in the set of self-adjoint projections on a [Hilbert space](#) is called a [projection-valued measure](#); these are used in [functional analysis](#) for the [spectral theorem](#). When it is necessary to distinguish the usual measures which take non-negative values from generalizations, the term **positive measure** is used. Positive measures are closed under [conical combination](#) but not general [linear combination](#), while signed measures are the linear closure of positive measures.

Another generalization is the *finitely additive measure*, also known as a [content](#). This is the same as a measure except that instead of requiring *countable* additivity we require only *finite* additivity. Historically, this definition was used first. It turns out that in general, finitely additive measures are connected with notions such as [Banach limits](#), the dual of L^∞ and the [Stone–Čech compactification](#). All these are linked in one way or another to the [axiom of choice](#). Contents remain useful in certain technical problems in [geometric measure theory](#); this is the theory of [Banach measures](#).

A [charge](#) is a generalization in both directions: it is a finitely additive, signed measure.^[23] (Cf. [ba space](#) for information about *bounded* charges, where we say a charge is *bounded* to mean its range is a bounded subset of R .)

See also



- [Abelian von Neumann algebra](#)
- [Carathéodory's extension theorem](#)
- [Almost everywhere](#)
- [Content \(measure theory\)](#)

- [Fubini's theorem](#)
- [Fatou's lemma](#)
- [Fuzzy measure theory](#)
- [Geometric measure theory](#)
- [Hausdorff measure](#)
- [Inner measure](#)
- [Lebesgue integration](#)
- [Lebesgue measure](#)
- [Lorentz space](#)
- [Lifting theory](#)
- [Measurable cardinal](#)
- [Measurable function](#)
- [Minkowski content](#)
- [Outer measure](#)
- [Product measure](#)
- [Pushforward measure](#)
- [Regular measure](#)
- [Vector measure](#)
- [Valuation \(measure theory\)](#)
- [Volume form](#)

Notes

1. One way to rephrase our definition is that μ is semifinite if and only if $(\forall A \in \mu^{\text{pre}}\{+\infty\})(\exists B \subseteq A)(0 < \mu(B) < +\infty)$. Negating this rephrasing, we find that μ is not semifinite if and only if $(\exists A \in \mu^{\text{pre}}\{+\infty\})(\forall B \subseteq A)(\mu(B) \in \{0, +\infty\})$. For every such set A , the subspace measure induced by the subspace sigma-algebra induced by A , i.e. the restriction of μ to said subspace sigma-algebra, is a $0 - \infty$ measure that is not the zero measure.

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External links

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