

Gotong Royong Culture as an Alternative to Political Funding in Local Election

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Abstract: This research seeks to explore the phenomenon of gotong royong in political funding, which occurred in several districts/cities in Central Java during the election momentum used as one of the political funding strategies. This study uses the concept of campaign funds, and campaign expenditure as an analytical tool. Political funding has an important role because it intersects with many aspects of political activity. Indonesia as a pluralistic and multicultural nation has a variety of local wisdom, one of which is the culture of gotong royong. Especially, practices in the context gotong royong that occurred in Central Java's based political funding of Pilkada, which used as case study in this research. It can be optimised in social terms, and also in the political context. The result of this research is an alternative to political funding that raises public confidence to revive the values of gotong royong culture in building a more established democratic society. Based on the case studies studied, local wisdom-based election political funding alternatives were identified based on several factors. The first factor is building sustainability from the cultural value of gotong royong. Second, through cultural values that are built and then supported by mutual understanding communication among existing stakeholders to strengthen and preserve local wisdom-based political funding. Thirdly, it forms the political awareness of the community, the political awareness of the community that is formed will support candidates who really have the competence to solve regional problems. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach by observing the dynamics of gotong royong culture as an alternative to political funding which makes this study interesting to be researched more deeply.

Keyword: Political Funding, Alternative Political Funding, Local Wisdom, Gotong Royong Culture.

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INTRODUCTION

The research aims to portrays the complexity of case studies in the political funding model in Central Java can be identified as a form of research in the form of intrinsic, instrumental and holistic case studies. The intrinsic case study aims to understand the case of *gotong royong*-based political funding which is a new phenomenon in the context of political funding in Indonesia that

is interesting to study. In line with instrumental case studies are used to find novelty in the context of political funding in Indonesia based on the *gotong royong* approach. However, a holistic case study that aims to examine and see a case as a whole both from the social aspects, social problems, characteristics, and events that occur in the context of Central Java's *gotong royong*-based political funding in *Pilkada*.

Pilkada, which is held every five years, is a reflection of a democratic country in seizing positions for regional leadership. The elected regional head candidates should be those who are solutive and bring a vision and mission to solve regional problems (Adams, 2010; Fleischmann & Stein, 1998; Warganegara & Waley, 2022). In practice, not all elected candidates are capable of solving regional problems (Marschall et al., 2011; Taylor & Vanhooren, 2021). In fact, some elected candidates are candidates who only have strong financial capital to influence people's choices. One source of reputable political funding that has a positive impact is public funding. Public funding essentially serves to ensure that elections are equal and provide a diversity of choices for constituents. The high source of funding from competitors often creates a gap between election participants, so it is necessary to limit its use and require other ways of obtaining funding.

In the struggle for the leadership of the regional head, financial capability becomes a challenge to finance the winning in the election contestation. Political funding has an important role because it intersects with many aspects of political activity (Gulzar et al., 2022; Warganegara & Waley, 2022). The high cost of politics is due to the rampant money politics and this practice is a serious problem in the democratic system in Indonesia (Noor et al., 2021; Purwaningsih & Widodo, 2021). Therefore, other alternatives in political funding are needed to respond to the challenges of organising expensive elections. Indonesia as a pluralistic and multicultural nation has a variety of local wisdom, one of which is the culture of *gotong royong*. The potential of *gotong royong* culture can be optimised not only in social terms, but also in the political context (Abiyyu, 2022; Mahardini & Setiawan, 2022; Vasvári, 2022).

Funding problems also arise in many regional elections with various transactional political practices involving many political actors in it (Mietzner, 2012; Reuter, 2015; Saraswati, 2021). Most of the funding does not come from internal political members, so it can cause new problems such as not accommodating existing internal forces because they are inferior to outside sources of funding. This also applies to election contestation. There are candidates who have large economic capital, so they are very likely to be invited by political parties to advance in the contestation. The implication is that this worsens regeneration within the party. Party cadres who have served and have great potential in advancing the party are inversely proportional to become enemies of the party.

Political funding can be found at the intersection of many important aspects of political society. Organising free and fair elections, democratic politics, effective governance, political party funding, election campaigns, and corruption are all related to money politics (Im, 2022; Marschall et al., 2011). In addition, adequate finances can provide opportunities for candidates to engage with their voters (Briffault, 2006; Norris & Van Es, 2016). However, if excessive funds are used, it can lead to digression or irregularities in the organising of elections (Marschall et al., 2011; Taylor & Vanhooren, 2021). Similarly, the relationship between money and politics is a serious problem for governments with democratic systems (Benito et al., 2022; Noor et al., 2021). Political society works positively if the use of money can be managed properly. Funding can open up access to democratic systems, such as advertising spending, operating political parties, selecting candidates, and mobilising voters. For these reasons, political funding affects almost all aspects of democratic society (Noor et al., 2021; Warganegara & Waley, 2022).

Indonesia as a democratic system, with an implementation that is not yet at a mature stage, makes money politics a tool used to mobilise public support. There are various ways and forms of money politics that emerge in the organisation of general elections (Benito et al., 2022; Norris & Van Es, 2016). Starting from giving money directly, giving money in groups, giving money during a success team meeting, giving basic necessities, or financial assistance for mosques. Then there are long-term money politics practices with programmatic policy misappropriation. This long-term money politics can take the form of political promises, grants, and certain projects given to individuals or groups (Abiyyu, 2022; Gulzar et al., 2022). The practice of money politics can be said to be the cause of various kinds of political corruption in the future. Unfortunately, the practice of money politics continues to take place in the contestation of general elections in Indonesia.

Table.1 Patterns of Political funding in Several Countries

No.	Country	Rules and Regulations	Announcements and Reports	Community Donation	Private Sector Contribution Restrictions	Limitation of Campaign Spending
1	Austria	Available	Available	None	None	None
2	Denmark	Available	None	None	None	None
3	France	Available	Available	Available	Available (Prohibited)	Available
4	Hungary	Available	Available	None	None	Available
5	Netherlands	Available	Available	None	None	None
6	UK	Available	Available	None	None	Available
7	Germany	Available	Available	None	None	None

Source: Processed from secondary data that modified by researcher, 2022

Indonesia as a pluralistic and multicultural nation has diverse local wisdom. Local wisdom is a way of understanding life, knowledge, and various strategies that are reflected in the activities of local communities to answer problems or fulfil their needs (Warganegara & Waley, 2022). The potential of the *gotong royong* culture or means of togetherness has optimised not only in social terms, but also in the political context (Mahardini & Setiawan, 2022). The spirit of togetherness and working together raises optimism to build a more established democratic society in Indonesia.

The implementation of local wisdom in the political context is the case in *Siau Tagulandang Biaro* Regency (*Sitaro*). The people of *Sitaro* Regency have a culture of *gotong royong*, which they call *Mupalose*. This social capital was optimised by the head of the General Election Supervisory Agency (*Bawaslu*) of *Sitaro* Regency, who was participated by traditional leaders, community leaders, religious leaders, and community organisations to build collective awareness in fighting money politics. Through the optimisation of the *Mupalose* culture, the people of *Sitaro* district are expected to work together to help election supervisors to prevent or report any election violations (Benito et al., 2022; Mahardini & Setiawan, 2022; Vasvári, 2022).

Furthermore, the "community service" program carried out between academics at the University, together with the General Election Commission (KPU) *Bukittinggi*, in optimising the Election Smart House - RPP (*Rumah Pintar Pemilu*) based on local wisdom. The establishment of the RPP is actually a forum and political learning resource centre for the community to better understand the democratic system (Warganegara & Waley, 2022). The local wisdom-based learning models are as follows; (1) culture-based learning models through games and traditional songs; (2) culture-based learning models through folklore that lives in the community; (3) culture-based learning models using traditional tools. Based on these three models, political learning materials are elaborated with traditional nuances in *Minang* culture. The materials displayed are how to become an egalitarian leader or equal to the community. Democracy should coincide with customs and the use of traditional rhymes that have long lived and developed in the *Bukittinggi* community (Warganegara & Waley, 2022). In addition, this research aims to find out more deeply how the local wisdom of the *gotong royong* culture as another alternative in political funding in the regional head elections in Central Java Province. Remains, the specificity of the case study in this research can be seen through the perspective of the use of *gotong royong*-based political funding in Central Java in winning candidates in various districts / cities.

In addition, several important issues related to the phenomenon of political funding through *gotong royong* culture were identified. First, the process of the formation of the phenomenon of *gotong royong* culture has not been clearly described, which parties are involved, how it is managed, until the use and accountability of the results of political funding through *gotong royong* culture is carried out. Second, although there is no guarantee that funding sources from various parties can guarantee winning candidates in political contestation, there is a tendency for the role and contribution of cooperation culture in the funding activities carried out.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Democracy is a system in which the government is controlled by the people, and in which the people are considered equal in exercising that control (Baker, 2018; Fenton, 2017). However, unequal access to political funding leads to improper political gamesmanship (Edelman, 2020; Kusumasari, 2020). The rapid growth of campaign spending in many countries has exacerbated

the problem of political funding and spending (Anggono & Wahanisa, 2022; Feillard, 2013; Ufen, 2008). The large amount of political funding in some election campaigns in Indonesia makes it impossible for political parties to build co-operation and establish funding assistance relationships with several mechanisms, including large private donor funding to compete in the electoral process (Mietzner, 2012; Reuter, 2015; Saraswati, 2021).

The financing of political party "campaign funds" and election campaigns must be based on principles and rules (Saidi et al., 2021; Suaib et al., 2017). One of them is a reasonable balance between public and private funding (Reuter, 2015; Septiadi et al., 2021). Proportional criteria in the current electoral context are related to distributions and contributions by related parties to parties, applicable rules on private donations, thresholds on parties, and campaign finance expenditures related to election campaigns (Mietzner, 2012; Septiadi et al., 2021). This includes complete transparency of the identity of givers and supporters in campaign financing, as well as the establishment of independent auditing authorities and sanctions for parties and candidates who break the rules (Kusumasari, 2020).

In its implementation, political parties require adequate funding (Reuter, 2015; Septiadi et al., 2021)). The relationship between funding and politics, however, is controversial and there is much debate about the role and relevance of funding's influence on democratic political processes and the unauthorized personal enrichment of politicians (Saidi et al., 2021; Suaib et al., 2017).. While the non-transparent aspects of political funding should not be overlooked, the relevance of funding goes far beyond unauthorized sources and flows to parties and politicians (Kusumasari, 2020). The scope of political funding has a broader relevance in the context of democratic functioning and should therefore be viewed more broadly than simply debating the non-transparency of political party funding (Reuter, 2015; Septiadi et al., 2021).

More specifically, political activity involves expenditures that should be seen as necessary and unavoidable costs of democracy (Kusumasari, 2020). As political funding is one of the most important resources for political parties, which are the main tools of modern democracies, political funding plays an important role in the democratic process (Kusumasari, 2020). Functionally, political parties need to maintain their party organization, employ party personnel, conduct election campaigns, and communicate with voters at large (Reuter, 2015; Septiadi et al., 2021). To carry out these functions, appropriate funding resources are required and must be available to political parties (Mietzner, 2012; Septiadi et al., 2021). Because political funding in the democratic process is important and has a role that must be properly regulated by public law (Saidi et al., 2021; Suaib et al., 2017).

The type of political funding in parties traditionally, mainly exclusively through membership fees, but is no longer widely implemented by most parties in modern democracies (Mietzner, 2012; Septiadi et al., 2021). But it does not rule out the possibility of political funding from the private sector apart from membership fees, both from inside and outside the party (Kusumasari, 2020). In addition, there are also contributions from elected party members in both the executive and legislative branches from allowance deductions, which may also be a form of hidden public funding that is difficult to publicize with independence and mandates on party rules, especially when payments are obligations from the party that politicians must fulfil (Mietzner, 2012; Septiadi et al., 2021).

Other sources of political funding such as donations, however, face risks in building relationships to donate money and specific political decisions (Reuter, 2015; Septiadi et al., 2021). In this context, the misuse of political funding may reduce public trust in the political system and its political actors, thereby undermining democratic legitimacy (Kusumasari, 2020). In practice, the implementation of political funding through donations has increased and become a trend in political funding (Reuter, 2015; Septiadi et al., 2021).

Party funding generally refers to all regulations of the Republic of Indonesia Law No. 7/2017 on general elections, and/or legal documents related to the funding and financing operations of political parties. The regulatory framework for political funding includes, constitutional provisions, laws on political parties and laws on political party financing and election campaigns passed by the legislature, and all other laws that impact on political party financing (Feillard, 2013; Kusumasari, 2020; Saidi et al., 2021; Septiadi et al., 2021).

In addition, it is undeniable that political parties need access to funding to play a role in the political process. At the same time, the role of funding in politics is arguably the biggest threat to

democracy around the world today (Reuter, 2015; Septiadi et al., 2021). This challenge is beginning to be realized with a "*gotong royong*" approach to political funding. Campaign finance spending depends on how political parties and candidates handle political finance spending (Feillard, 2013; Kusumasari, 2020; Saidi et al., 2021; Septiadi et al., 2021). Political parties, especially in emerging democracies, struggle to establish transparent and well-functioning oversight frameworks for political finance spending (Feillard, 2013; Kusumasari, 2020; Saidi et al., 2021; Septiadi et al., 2021). Finally, in understanding the political phenomenon of *gotong royong* funding, this study uses the theory of campaign funds, and campaign expenditure as an analytical tool. This consideration is since the phenomenon of *gotong royong* political funding is a form of politics and a voluntary attitude to provide political funding support. In other words, *gotong royong* is a form of fundraising with political objectives, voluntarily or without coercion in *gotong royong* activities. The community follows and is involved in these activities without coercion and certain parties.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses descriptive qualitative research in looking at the phenomenon of *gotong royong* culture as an alternative to political funding. Qualitative research technique is a type of research in which the pattern of findings is not through statistical procedures or other forms of calculation but seeks to understand and classify the meaning of an event of human behaviour interaction in a particular situation according to a predetermined pattern. Qualitative researchers collect data through examining documents, observing behaviour, or interviewing participants (J.W. Creswell, 2003; Haradhan, 2018). Primary data was collected using in-depth interviews with relevant informants and secondary data through the study of reading materials obtained from various literatures, such as books, journals, and articles. The location of this research was in the Central Java Province.

Informants are people who are used to provide information about the situation and conditions of the research setting (Warganegara & Waley, 2022). The selection of informants in this study used purposive sampling technique, namely choosing people who are considered to know and master the social situation under study (J.W. Creswell, 2003; Haradhan, 2018).. This is done because the small amount of data has not been able to provide satisfactory data, so look for other people as data sources, thus the sample number of data sources will be greater. The analytical activity is drawing conclusions and verification. As data collection activities are carried out, a qualitative analyst begins to look for the meaning of things, noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal pathways, and propositions. Initially vague conclusions become more detailed. "Final" conclusions emerge depending on the size of the collection of field notes, the coding, storage, and retrieval methods used, the skills of the researcher, and the demands of the funder, but they are often pre-formulated from the outset. Data analysis techniques are carried out interactively and take place continuously until they meet the data needs. Activities in the analysis include data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (J.W. Creswell, 2003; Haradhan, 2018). Therefore, in collecting data, it is done by writing, editing, classifying, reducing, presenting, and describing local wisdom in the form of *gotong royong* culture as an alternative to political funding in organising regional head elections.

The complexity of case studies in political funding based on *gotong royong* culture can be identified as a form of research in the form of intrinsic, instrumental and holistic case studies (John W Creswell & Hirose, 2019; Putra et al., n.d.; Siahaan & Tampubolon, 2021). First, the intrinsic case study aims to understand the case of political funding based on *gotong royong* culture which is a new phenomenon in the context of political funding in Indonesia. Second, instrumental case studies are used to find novelty in the context of political funding in Indonesia based on *gotong royong* culture. Third, a holistic case study that aims to examine and see a case both from social aspects, social problems, characteristics, and events that occur in the context of political funding based on *gotong royong* culture in Central Java. This case is seen through the perspective of the use of political funding based on *gotong royong* culture in Central Java in winning candidates in the electoral process.

RESULT AND DICUSSION

Political parties and candidates have to spend a lot of money to win an election (Mietzner, 2012; Reuter, 2015; Saraswati, 2021), so it is important for political parties and candidates to prepare funding to facilitate and ensure their ideas are spread to voters. Through massive election campaigns, there are more implications for the support of political parties and candidates (Saidi et al., 2021; Septiadi et al., 2021). The role of funding is important in democracy to realise the strengthening of political parties and candidates when carrying out various political activities. In general, the role of funding in political contestation includes several types of uses, namely: (1) election campaign funding, (2) political party funding during and outside elections, (3) financial institutions in the form of foundations that have special affinity with political parties and candidates, (4) political lobbying costs and the use of media such as newspapers and so on to convey political messages and information, (5) financing in handling cases that have relevance to politics, and (6) spending on third parties other than political parties and candidates, as well as the activities of elected officials (Davies, 2021; Siahaan & Tampubolon, 2021). Therefore, state control is fundamental in regulating political funding by prioritising the principles of equality and justice. Various ways are used by various democratic countries in regulating sources of political funding.

Local wisdom is a way of life for local people to solve problems in their environment. Local wisdom is a means to maintain the noble values of the local community in defending themselves from cultures that are not in accordance with their values. This emerged in the regional head elections in Central Java. The local wisdom reflected in the spirit of *gotong royong* built by the community to support candidates who they consider capable of bringing Central Java to be more prosperous. Although the *gotong royong* phenomenon does not occur in all regions, at least someone has started to make changes so that democracy in Central Java is heading towards a more established direction.

The emergence of a “*gotong royong*” culture is based on the poor interaction between political party politicians and the community. It is as if there is a barrier that separates the two and creates a distance between them. Starting from this poor interaction, it then creates a very transactional relationship (Benito et al., 2022; Mahardini & Setiawan, 2022; Noor et al., 2021). This transactional relationship is characterised by the practice of money politics in influencing people's choices or in other words buying people's votes. This deviation has caused many people to get involved with practical politics or money politics, which has continued to occur in several elections. Building the values of *gotong royong* to rebuild the relationship between politicians and the community to be more positive and together improve each other.

In the phenomenon of political funding through *gotong royong* raised in this study. It has a fairly strong relationship in the context of electoral politics, including political volunteers. In the phenomenon of political funding mutual assistance, volunteers and political support in this case have a very different pattern, and are very open to the public, but are accommodated by the community, and volunteers. This was also conveyed by one informant who stated that:

“Gotong royong is published for all, so it is not related to anything, there is no common identity because it is published for the public, even though it is organised by a community of volunteers but it is published for the public” (Informant 1).

Several important issues related to *gotong royong* were identified. First, the process of the formation of the *gotong royong* phenomenon has not been clearly described, which parties are involved, how it is managed, until the use and accountability of the results of *gotong royong* are carried out. Second, although there is no guarantee that funding sources from various parties can guarantee victory to candidates in political contestation, there is a tendency for the role and contribution of *gotong royong* in political funding activities in the Central Java Regional Elections. This was also conveyed by informants from candidate related to the management of *gotong royong* political funding that;

The form does not have to be in the form of money, even if it is in the form of money it is from a limited community, with limited funds I have to manoeuvre so that the funds come from several parties that donate what they can donate, but do not hand over money to me (Informant 1).

One source of reputable political funding that has a positive impact is public funding. According to (Saidi et al., 2021; Septiadi et al., 2021) public funding basically serves to ensure equal elections and presents a diversity of choices for constituents. Therefore, it needs to be limited in its use and requires other ways of obtaining funding, which has occurred in the practice of political funding through *gotong royong*.

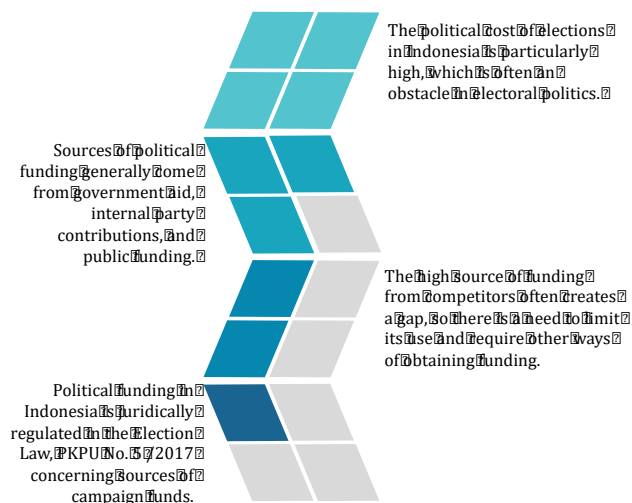


Figure.1 The emergence factor of a “*gotong royong*”, analysed based on secondary data, 2022

The *gotong royong* that was found was when candidates campaigned in villages, where the community helped to facilitate and provide food with their own funds. These values of *gotong royong* can be termed as "from the community for the community". Then together the community participated in a series of campaigns that they had prepared by the regional head candidates. Another form of *gotong royong* is crowdfunding called *Samirun (Sami-Sami Urunan)*. People who participated in the *Samirun* movement donated some of their property that would be used for campaign financing. The spirit of *gotong royong* carried out by cross-community organisations and supported by Islamic organisations such as NU, Muhammadiyah, and other organisations. The participation and support of community organisations makes the culture of *gotong royong* sustainable (Adams, 2010; Briffault, 2006; Mahardini & Setiawan, 2022). Although in general, this activity is only attended by people who are Muslim, although sometimes there are non-Muslim participants who participate. The establishment of political funding derived from *gotong royong* has at least three benefits for democratic society. First, the high cost of politics can be alleviated by the existence of *gotong royong*. Second, it minimises the possibility of people getting candidates who have the potential to commit corruption. Third, the community participates and is active in democracy and associations while candidates are campaigning, so that the community gets to know the candidates. With the formation of political awareness of the community and consciously towards choosing candidates who really have the competence in solving regional problems.

The management of collected resources is divided into two categories: the first is in the form of funds or money, the second is material. The first category is clearly in the form of money that can be channelled directly to support campaign funding. The second category, material, is in the form of goods. People who have other resources besides money can provide commodities they have. Some of the materials found in this *gotong royong* include donations of rice, onions, and

Qur'ans. The results of the collected resources were collected at the post which was then redistributed to the people in need. The *gotong royong* activity aims to make the community finance the campaign for the campaign of their leaders and not the leaders who campaign to fund their people. This activity is also a means of political education for the community against the practice of money politics that often occurs in *Pilkada*.

The biggest challenge of the *gotong royong* movement is that many people have been indoctrinated by money politics, making them reluctant to participate. People who are indoctrinated with money politics feel that they should be the ones getting the money, not the ones spending the money. They do not know the long-term impacts that can arise from the practice of money politics. This also makes it difficult to invite people massively to contribute their wealth and energy. Furthermore, the resources that have been collected are not in one place or centralised (Gulzar et al., 2022; Noor et al., 2021; Taylor & Vanhooren, 2021; Vasvári, 2022). This problem is an obstacle in channelling the resources that have been collected. In another case, the electoral law regulating campaign funds has an impact on the difficulty of identification. If the amount of funds managed is very large, campaign funds must be reported because not all donors are willing to provide their identities because it is considered troublesome.

CONCLUSION

Political costs in electoral politics in Indonesia are very high. With the high political cost, the implementation of political funding practices is important for every candidate in the elections. This has led to the phenomenon of political funding through "*gotong royong*". The principle of gotong-royong as social solidarity that occurs in people's lives, especially those who form communities, and solidarity within political parties. The desire to create a more established democratic society has led the people of Central Java to find the best solution for now. The culture of *gotong royong* that is encouraged has a positive impact on the implementation of the Central Java Regional Election. There are three benefits of the culture of *gotong royong* in political funding in the *Pilkada*. First, it eases the burden of political costs when campaigning, second, it reduces the practice of money politics which is still a serious problem in elections. Third, increasing public political awareness through direct participation, supported by cross-organisations to create sustainability of the cultural value of *gotong royong*. Through a culture of *gotong royong* and mutual understanding communication between existing stakeholders serves to preserve local wisdom-based political funding. The participation of many elements of society creates public political awareness. With the formation of political awareness, there is a positive impact, namely that the community will consciously choose candidates who really have competence in solving regional problems. This research provides a new practice that can be a source of reference and create a funding movement that comes from the community. The importance of involving the community in the source of party funding through *gotong royong* or candidates is one aspect in controlling the leader's policies in accordance with the wishes of the community. This is also a challenge for future research as well, to further look at political funding clusters through the *gotong royong* approach.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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