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The Religious Spirit Embedded in The Work Ethic of Female Workers at PT. Rokok Djarum Kudus

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of workers in factories has become a real reality. Women as a living entity have become part of the family's economic life, but the spirit of work for women is part of religious expression. Work ethic, religion and regulations are part of the life of women factory workers in Kudus. This research aimed to observe the religious spirit embedded inside work ethic of female workers at PT. Rokok Djarum Kudus and the relationship of work ethic with religious fanatics that are part of women's lives. According to Sjafrin's economic exchange and Mudrajad Kuntjoro's work ethic theories by qualitative analysis cross collected data by interviews, observations with purposive sampling, and documentation are the main parts of the study's exploration. The research findings show that the very strict regulations from the company do not make them give up on their work but remain enthusiastic about building a productive work ethic. The work ethic of these female workers is evident in their daily

factory work and their religious practices, both at work and at home. These female workers are able to provide a decent living for their families and the companies they work for.

Key Words: Factory workers, job demands, religious anthropology.

ABSTRAK

Fenomena pekerja perempuan di pabrik menjadi realita yang nyata. Perempuan sebagai entitas kehidupan telah menjadi bagian dari kehidupan ekonomi keluarga, tetapi semangat bekerja bagi perempuan merupakan bagian dari ekspresi agama. Etos kerja, agama dan regulasi menjadi bagian dari kehidupan perempuan pekerja pabrik di Kudus. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang semangat beragama dalam etos kerja buruh perempuan PT. Rokok Djarum Kudus dan hubungan etos kerja dengan semangat beragama yang menjadi bagian kehidupan perempuan. Teori pertukaran ekonomi Sjafrudin Sairin dan etos kerja Mudrajat Kuntjoro dengan analisis kualitatif melalui wawancara secara purposive sampling, observasi dan dokumentasi dijadikan bagian utama eksplorasi kajian. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa semangat beragama para buruh perempuan di PT. Rokok Djarum Kudus tampak terlihat dari kegigihan mereka beraktivitas sehari-hari di pabrik. Regulasi yang sangat ketat dari perusahaan tidak menjadikan mereka menyerah dalam bekerja namun tetap semangat membangun etos kerja yang produktif. Etos kerja para buruh perempuan tampak jelas dalam keseharian mereka bekerja di pabrik dan menerapkan praktik-praktik keagamaan baik di tempat kerja atau di rumah masing-masing. Para buruh perempuan ini mampu memberikan kehidupan layak bagi keluarganya dan perusahaan yang mereka tempati.

Kata Kunci: Buruh pabrik rokok, regulasi kerja, antropologi keagamaan.

Introduction

The growth of a community in a region is closely related to the prevailing economic situation. The pace of economic development in a region will have a distinct impact on the community. This can also be observed carefully in the regional situation surrounding the lives of the people in Kudus Regency. Kudus Regency is one of the regencies in Central Java Province with a very high level of cigarette industry. In its early stages, the Kretek cigarette industry was the mainstay of production in Kudus City, Central Java. Kretek cigarettes have been the mainstay of Kudus City's production since 1921 to the present, originating from the recipe of a merchant, Niti Semito (Rea, 2012, p. 188).

This historical basis is the main evidence of the growth of the cigarette industry in Kudus Regency. This rapid growth of the cigarette industry paints a realistic picture of the economic conditions of the people of Kudus, who depend on the cigarette industry in their region. The development of the cigarette industry in Kudus City has indeed contributed significantly to the national economy. This is based on the socio-cultural conditions of Indonesian society, which considers cigarettes to be one of the legacies of their ancestors. The practice of smoking in Indonesia is visible everywhere (Sunaryo, 2013, p. 19). It is present in private and public spaces, in cities and in rural areas. Cigarettes are consumed by various strata of society, from the people to officials, young and old, rich and poor, men and women, including religious and spiritual leaders.

A factual description of the prevalence of cigarette smoking among the general public, as noted by Thomas Sunaryo, is commonly found in Javanese society. In his statement, Sunaryo explains that this rough description is by no means intended to suggest or claim that the Javanese lifestyle is heavily influenced by cigarettes (Sunaryo, 2013, p. 20). This is because not all Javanese people and those who live in Java are smokers. Indeed, there are those who are truly heavy smokers. However, there are also many who only smoke occasionally. Sometimes they smoke, sometimes they don't. There are those who were initially heavy or light smokers, but eventually quit smoking for health reasons or other personal reasons. There are even those who have lived their entire lives without ever smoking. They are free from cigarettes, have never been exposed to tobacco, cigarettes, or anything related to them.

The economic value of cigarette factories cannot be denied due to the high production value generated by tobacco as a raw material. Among various agricultural commodities, tobacco is one of the commodities that contributes significantly to the economy (Alamsyah, 2011, p. 5). Not to mention its ability to build social networks, even becoming a culture that colors the daily lives of the community. In some areas, such as Temanggung and Pamekasan, tobacco has even become a dominant commodity that drives the lives of the community. Nationally, government revenue from cigarette excise in 2010 amounted to Rp 62.14 trillion, exceeding the target set by the Revised State Budget (ABPN-Perubahan) of Rp 59.26 trillion, making it the second largest contributor after oil and gas. This fact confirms the economic value of tobacco production, which, with its many variants, is a high-value production for the community. The economic growth of the cigarette industry in Javanese society in particular and Indonesia in general is also evident in the development of industrial processes

that absorb many workers. The cigarette industry in Kudus City has always absorbed a large number of female workers (Rea, 2012, p. 188). There have always been more female workers. Hand-rolled kretek cigarettes (SKT), which are mostly smoked by men, are generally produced by women. Djarum 76 SKT, which is produced in Kudus City, employs more than 90 percent female cigarette rollers. The high level of accuracy, precision, and meticulousness required when rolling cigarettes means that more women than men work as cigarette rollers. This SKT factory employs more than 4,000 cigarette rollers, divided into several groups. They work six days a week. They work eight hours a day, but on Saturdays, they work half a day.

The dynamics of cigarette factory workers in Kudus City provide a unique picture of the economic life of the community in contact with the reality of life in Kudus, known as the City of Santri. The connection between the City of Kretek and the City of Santri in the midst of community life is evidenced by the establishment of one of the historical legacies of Walisongo in Kudus City. The Al-Aqsa Mosque, commonly known as the Menara Kudus Mosque, is a legacy of Raden Dja'far Shodiq, better known as Sunan Kudus. The Menara Kudus Mosque was built in the 16th century, specifically in 1549 AD (Lombard, 2005, p. 54). Lombard reinforces the reference to this area as Kudus City by referring to al-Quds (the Arabic name for Jerusalem) as a religious city, a holy city, and a city with a large and beautiful mosque, the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The religious foundation that grew in the midst of Kudus society became a fundamental instrument that could be used to observe the dynamics of religious and economic growth for the Kudus community in general. The Exploration of this condition refers to the explanation in economic anthropology, which view exchange as a cultural phenomenon with broad dimensions, not only economic, but also religious, technological, ecological, political, and social organizational (Sjafri Sairin, 2002, p. 39). The manifestations of religion and economy that surround the lives of the people of Kudus can be a major basis for revealing the core of the community's understanding of religion and economy.

The relationship between religion and economics in society are two fundamental aspects whose manifestations in society must be recognized. It is important to remember that economic and religious relations are two interrelated dimensions that shape each other's existence. In this case, a simple illustration of the relationship between religion and economics can be seen in the phenomenon of rationality and the economic background behind the sanctification of cows. The phenomenon of sacred cows in India is controversial

in many ways. In a society where malnutrition and nutritional deficiencies are widespread, cows are allowed to live and die without their meat and fat ever being utilized. Cows in India have also exceeded the carrying capacity of the environment, as the natural food supply for cows in India is only sufficient to feed 1/3 to 1/2 of the existing population. Inevitably, much of the food that should be consumed by humans ends up in the mouths of cows (Sjafri Sairin, 2002, p. 182).

An ironic phenomenon exists in India, where the economic value attached to a cow is greater than its value in terms of improving the nutrition of the general public. This can serve as a basis for analyzing the realistic gamble taken by cigarette factory workers in the city of Kudus. Efforts to comply with the binding system determined by the factory mean that they accept all the rules and do not violate the existing regulations. In the morning, as the call to dawn prayer echoes from several mosques in the Kudus area, it is a sign for the workers to immediately head to the factory where they work. This situation is a common sight that can be seen every day on many roads in the city and sub-districts of Kudus. In principle, one of the binding obligations that a Muslim must fulfill is to always remember God after performing the five daily prayers. However, the strong bond of the system that regulates cigarette factory workers in Kudus forces them to prioritize economic values over strengthening their spirituality through worship.

The irony that shows the religious ethos at stake in the working conditions of cigarette factory workers in Kudus City is illustrated by the emergence of stressful attitudes among workers. The rapid growth of the cigarette industry in Kudus City has absorbed thousands of workers, which in turn supports the economy of Kudus City (Dhania, 2010). However, along with this development, the irony of this city is very apparent. Dhania explains that many cigarette factories in Kudus City violate workers' rights, including paying cigarette workers wages that are far below the minimum wage in Kudus City and not providing health insurance. Furthermore, Dhania emphasizes that the situation described above triggers psychological pressure or work stress. An example of the irony of the industrial situation in Kudus City is the case of the Djambu Bol Cigarette Factory, which has laid off thousands of its employees without paying them several months' worth of wages and severance pay.

This condition is a concrete illustration that the industrial situation developing in Kudus City, with its regional characteristics as a city of Islamic boarding schools with a deep religious dimension, contrasts with the events that are unfolding. In the end, the trade-offs between the religious ethos and the

workers of the cigarette factory become unclear to analyze the dividing line that can be drawn. The precarious working conditions faced by cigarette factory workers in Kudus City are evident from the objective research data produced by Dhania (2010), which identifies the high working hours as the main cause of stress among cigarette factory workers in Kudus City. This is in line with the statement made by Teguh Sujati that the intensity of the workers in Kudus City can be seen from their real conditions, which tend to be referred to as 'Kuli Raup'. The binding working hours force them to rush to the factory to work, even though in reality they have not yet finished showering.

The research method developed in this study is field research. Meanwhile, the approach used is qualitative descriptive analysis. The description of the field data is explored qualitatively based on the findings. This principle of argumentation is in line with Creswel (2009, p. 16) explanation that qualitative analysis is a research step to reveal the participation of individuals or groups in solving social problems. The research process began with fundamental questions about the steps, data collection strategies, the mechanism of researcher participation in the research, and inductive analysis from the basic parts of the research to the intended general terminology stage.

To produce good and focused research data, this study used data collection through interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with several workers involved in tobacco production using purposive sampling so that the authenticity of the collected data was sufficient. Observations were conducted to observe the activities of workers in carrying out their respective jobs. In this analysis, Sjafrin's economic exchange theory and Mudrajat Kuntjoro's work ethic will carefully examine the religious spirit of female workers at PT. Djarum Kudus in demonstrating their work ethic at the factory.

Cigarette Factories in the Economic and Religious Reality of Kudus Society

The presence of cigarette factories as part of the industrial structure in Kudus City is a general illustration that the economy of Kudus society depends on the realistic conditions of this economic industry. The high manifestation of this factory in the life of Kudus society can be seen from the existence of the Kretek Museum in Kudus City. According to Weix (1997) the Kretek Museum was established in 1986 as a representation of the local entrepreneurial tradition of the Kudus community and an explanation of the historiography of Kretek cigarette production. Weix also emphasized that the museum has non-

institutional authority in its capacity to explain the magnitude of cigarette production at present or in the future. The presence of cigarette factories in the midst of Kudus society is proof that this industry is an integral part of the local economic system.

The intense pressure to ratify national cigarette production has not weakened the community's efforts to continue tobacco production. It is interesting to note that in the research description (Alamsyah, 2011, p. 151), it is mentioned that the intense pressure to restrict tobacco production and tobacco packaging has not dampened the enthusiasm of tobacco farmers around the Kudus area. Farmers believe that a number of fatwas and cigarette regulations aimed at restricting tobacco will not affect their region. The reason they give is very simple. According to them, as long as cigarette factory warehouses still exist in their region, tobacco farming cannot be stopped.

Indonesia, as an independent nation, should certainly take a wise approach to the issue of kretek cigarettes, which are in fact a form of living cultural heritage and a symbol of national identity. Therefore, by eliminating this deeply rooted cultural tradition, the government has denied and violated the human rights of its citizens in terms of economic, social, and cultural rights. This condition is based on the existence of customs and rituals that are deeply ingrained in the beliefs of the community (Sunaryo, 2013, p. 50). These customs, which are deeply rooted in Indonesian society, as emphasized by Thomas Sunaryo above, explain that the production of cigarettes as a form of tobacco packaging is a cultural product that deserves lasting appreciation without being blamed as one of the causes of low reproduction rates in the community.

It is important to note that in recent years, cigarettes, a product that allows tobacco to have very high economic value, have been hampered by national and international health regulations. The controversy over tobacco control in Indonesia stems from the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), which classifies tobacco as an addictive substance that is harmful to health. This debate has prevented Indonesia, despite being one of the initiators of the WHO FCTC, from ratifying the convention to date. Health reasons are the main justification for supporters of ratification (Alamsyah, 2011, p. 2).

The strong and significant pressure of cigarette production exerted by both the government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is not an obstacle that can slow down the economy, especially in the city of Kudus. In the growth of the cigarette industry in Kudus Regency, the workers at the Djarum

Cigarette Factory can still be seen working intensively every day. Leaving after performing the dawn prayer, these cigarette factory workers still intensively chase the dawn to arrive at their respective workplaces. Undeniably, as the majority of the population adheres to Islamic teachings, the dawn prayer they perform is a race against time to get to work as quickly as possible so that they are not late.

Observing the religious situation and economic aspects developing in Kudus City, it can be carefully noted that their perspectives on religion and economics have two dimensions that need to be explained. This phenomenon can be synchronized with the perspective developed (Syam, 2007, p. 26) in his analysis of the lives of the Orang Bukit. Syam explains that religion in the lives of the Orang Bukit does not stand alone, it is not only related to sacred, supernatural, and divine matters, namely things that happen after life (death) and so on, but is also related to worldly matters. For example, the cycle of life, economy, and society. In social life, religion provides identity boundaries for its citizens so that people who convert to Islam are no longer considered Orang Bukit, but are considered Orang Dagang (merchants). Religion gives meaning to human social existence. In the economic sphere, religion also underpins their belief that farming is more important. This belief is formed through various ceremonies to the Divine, Spirits, and the Almighty, which originated from Suwara and Datu Tihawa.

The description of the Bukit people's religious and spiritual situation as illustrated by Syam above provides an understanding of the religious and social situation that has developed within the community. The dialectic between religious people and the worldly realities that surround them is an undeniable phenomenon. People will tend to discuss religious events around them with the real world they inhabit. This situation is also described by Benedict Spinoza in (Brian Moris, 2003, p. 173), with his argument that humans would not believe in superstitions if they could control situations through a set of rules, or if they always benefited from good luck. However, because they are often plagued by difficulties where rules are useless, and because they are always caught between the fluctuating emotions of hope and fear, most of them are very inclined to believe in strange things, thus giving rise to, maintaining, and developing superstitions that are fueled by fear.

The arguments presented by Syam and Benedict Spinoza above provide a mapping of correlative values that emerge in a person's behavior towards religion. The psychological values present in the reality of religiosity in society

are constantly dialectical with the facts surrounding their lives. Fear, perspectives on superstition, and/or religious rules that are attempted to be presented all interact intensively with the surrounding religious dimensions. From this perspective, it can also be argued that the perspective of the cigarette factory workers in Kudus City on religious beliefs will be completely influenced by the social aspects that surround them. Mas'udi (2019) notes that the religious aspects of a community will always be tied to the social dimensions that surround their lives. This is the case with the religious situation in Gunungwungkal, where the community strongly maintains the interfaith traditions of its residents because they are highly dependent on the social harmony that already exists and is well-established among them.

The stability of religious law in society will become a binding guideline that leads them to make religion itself run in parallel with agreed-upon social laws. From this perspective, Mas'udi (2016) explains that the basic meaning of religion as an entity will always correlate its existence with the religious life and diversity of society. The phenomenon described in this explanation can be used as a constructive formula to observe the regulations imposed by the Djarum Cigarette Factory in Kudus, which require workers to start work at dawn, based on the rules regulated by the cigarette factory. As a result, the religious dimension of performing zikr after performing the Fajr prayer is impossible to do except during the cigarette factory's work holidays.

The Relationship Between the Work Ethic of Cigarette Factory Workers and Religious Zeal

Discussions about women's work ethic are not a new dynamic in public spaces. Masudi (2019) notes that in the workplaces of Javanese women, they are very aware of their position in domestic and public spaces. The work done by these Javanese women points to the essence of work ethic itself as a representation of the state desired by an individual or group in terms of achievement in their work. Kirom (2018) notes that work ethic refers to the state of an individual or group in carrying out activities aimed at obtaining or achieving desired results. Analysis of work ethic is an important study in religious life because its presence can be a parameter for the achievement of success in this world and a guarantee of goodness in the hereafter. In this case, Kirom emphasizes that success in the hereafter cannot be separated from human success in this world.

The dynamics of religiosity depicted in the formulation of individual or group life as conveyed by Kirom become the foundation that greatly colors the work routines of female workers at the Djarum Cigarette Factory in Kudus. The perspective of exchange as a result of a strong work ethic is also clearly reflected in the activities of female workers at the Djarum Cigarette Factory in Kudus. The activities of the workers at the Djarum Cigarette Factory, with the dimension of their religious ethos at stake at the beginning of their work at the factory, can be observed in the aspect of exchange in the economic dimension. As noted by Sjafrin Sairin (2002, p. 38), in order to study the phenomenon of exchange, economics has its own methods when compared to economic anthropology.

Economics only deals with exchange that uses the mechanism of money. Meanwhile, in its early stages of development, economic anthropology dealt more with traditional exchange phenomena that did not use the mechanism of money. Such exchange existed in traditional and peasant societies, for example, gift exchange, kula trade, and potlach. The lack of attention paid by anthropologists to exchange phenomena that use monetary mechanisms was influenced by the early conditions of development, with anthropology focusing on traditional and rural societies with their subsistence economic systems. In economic anthropology, various forms of exchange found in traditional and rural societies that do not use monetary mechanisms are often referred to as reciprocity and redistribution.

The theoretical basis of economic anthropology presented by Sjafrin Sairin (2002) above shows that the economic aspects that operate within society are based entirely on the values of reciprocity and redistribution. Observing the work ethic and religious spirit of cigarette factory workers in Kudus City cannot be separated from the realistic conditions of exchange that each worker in the cigarette factory tries to achieve. In order to sell Hand-Rolled Cigarettes (SKT), cigarette factory workers in Kudus City hope for reciprocity for the services they provide. This fully illustrates the real patterns of work ethic that occur in cigarette factories based on the intended conclusion.

Based on the basic value of reciprocity that is found in every job of cigarette factory workers in Kudus City, it is also important to note that work ethic and religious values among them are situations that cannot be ignored. The awareness to fulfill family needs as an intention for worship is a common part that can be found in the work of cigarette factory workers in Kudus. This can be seen from the perspective presented by Kuncoro (2014), who explains that industrial development in a region is influenced, among other things, by the

surrounding geographical, cultural, and institutional aspects. This description certainly provides a separate note, namely the strong dedication of the Javanese people as the ethnic group of the Kudus community. The effort to serve the family is basic evidence that the work ethic manifested in community life and the dialectic that is attempted to be built towards religion is a common fact of Javanese society.

The situation that can be observed in the dialectic of the work ethic of Javanese society in general and Kudus in particular can be seen in the descriptions of the culture that has developed among Javanese society. The work ethic as a rolling force, which is mostly carried out by Javanese women, is a classic description that has been written about by Indonesian historians. In a literary illustration written by Setiawan Sigit Budhi (2013, pp. 23–24), the work ethic of a Javanese woman is described through the various types of work she does. The woman is referred to as Mbah Ponco. Mbah Ponco is a widow born in 1935 in Gunung Kidul, Special Region of Yogyakarta. Her day begins before the call to dawn prayer sounds and the faint sounds of prayer can be heard from her house.

As soon as she wakes up, Mbah Ponco hurries to the kitchen to drink water and boil water for coffee and tea. She enjoys a warm drink in the morning while indulging in her favorite pastime of smoking. When she is done, she soaks the clothes that need to be washed. She does not forget to turn off the lights at night. Sometimes, if her goats bleat, she will immediately go to the pen to check on them or simply to feed them. She never complained about having to wake up so early every day. Especially since Mbah Ponco was already awake in the middle of the night for night prayers. As an elderly woman, she felt that as she grew older, her sleep time decreased. She thought it was natural, besides the desire within her to always be close to God.

A simple and captivating description of the phenomenon of Javanese women's perseverance as explained above is a fact that can be observed to clarify the basic articulation of work ethic. Ethos comes from the Greek word *ethos*, which means attitude, personality, character, and belief in something. This attitude is possessed not only by individuals, but also by groups and even societies. Ethos is shaped by various habits, cultural influences, and belief systems. From the word *ethos*, we also know the words *ethics* and *etiquette*, which are close to the meaning of morals or values related to good and bad (morality), so that *ethos* contains a very strong passion or enthusiasm to do something optimally, better, and even strive to achieve the best possible quality of work. In this *ethos*, there is a kind of enthusiasm to perfect everything and

avoid all damage (fasad) so that every job is directed at reducing or even completely eliminating defects from the results of their work (Tasmara, 2002, p. 15) The spirit of building a strong work ethic, as possessed by Javanese women, cannot be separated from their understanding of Islam as a religious framework. Imam Suprayogo, in his introduction to Sastrahidayat (2009, p. viii), states that building a work culture from an Islamic perspective means improving the quality of Islam for Muslims themselves.

The qualities referred to include faith, Islam, sincerity, good deeds, and good character. All of these must be understood correctly and completely. Islamic values should be the driving force in improving work culture. Every Muslim must strive to understand these values and then use them as guidelines for daily life. If, for the time being, success has not been achieved through Islam, then there is no need to look for other alternatives whose truth is uncertain. The basic thing that is needed is to explore Islamic teachings as deeply as possible and disseminate all these teachings among Muslims.

Islam teaches that in carrying out work, one must be sincere, patient, trustworthy, and steadfast. Work that is not sincere will not be rewarded. Sincerity means wholeheartedness, earnestness, and totality. Patience means accepting any risks as a consequence of being involved in carrying out the work. A patient person will not complain, worry, or regret, but instead will accept whatever consequences come from carrying out the work. Trustworthiness means carrying out one's work wholeheartedly, not half-heartedly, and without any falsehood or deception. It means being punctual, accurate, and of high quality. Consistency means persevering until the work is completed (Sastrahidayat, 2009, p. viii).

Explaining the basic framework of work ethic as described by Sastrahidayat above, it can also be emphasized that work ethic is not a cultural phenomenon, but rather a sociological phenomenon whose existence is shaped by production relationships that arise as a result of the economic structure that exists in society. To be able to work hard, a person needs sufficient energy. Sufficient energy can be obtained if the person is able to obtain good nutrition, while good nutrition can be obtained if the person has the opportunity to work in order to earn enough income to obtain nutritious food so that they have enough energy to work better (Mubyarto, 1991, p. 4).

Work ethic and religious spirit are two aspects that are interrelated. Neither can be realized without realizing that the values used are closely linked. Religious awareness will become very meaningful when a person is able to realize the need to improve their life with nutritional elements that can support them. Supporting a person's nutritional consumption will fully support religious values that are more friendly and tolerant.

Conclusion

The female workers at the Djarum Cigarette Factory in Kudus are part of the Kudus community, which is commonly known as a religious community. They are workers who balance their enthusiasm for work with their religious beliefs. Many members of the Kudus community who are employed at the cigarette factory are motivated by the regulations set by the factory. This is a reason in itself to observe that the factory as a whole has authority that must be obeyed by all its employees. Conversely, the factory also has a responsibility to provide wages and benefits that must be given to its many workers.

The dialectic between work ethic and religious commitment is very evident in the lives of cigarette factory workers in Kudus City. This is evident at dawn or at Subuh (the time for morning prayer), when factory workers must rush to their respective workplaces so as not to be late, even though in principle, remembering Allah SWT is an encouragement conveyed by religion. However, the idealism of this situation is rarely found because most of the cigarette factory workers in Kudus City must prioritize other more pressing interests.

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